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## *Eleanor Estes and Her Books*

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In 1941, a new family came to make their home in America by way of the printing press and the understanding art of Eleanor Estes. The family is *The Moffats*, of Cranbury, Connecticut, and children and adults alike took them to their hearts. This book was followed a year later by *The Middle Moffat* and then came *Rufus M* in 1943. One cannot think of the three books separately, for together they make a perfect unit.

To readers of an older generation the comparison with *The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* is perhaps inevitable. The widowed mothers working to keep their brood together, the elder sisters who helped with the housework, the daily joys and sorrows of the children have on the surface a definite kinship but the sentimentality that the late nineteenth century demanded for the Peppers is completely absent from the Moffats. They are as real as the children next door. Perhaps they are even more convincing as we follow them through episode after episode and live in their thoughts which make

their motives clear, a privilege often denied us in looking at children we may know very well. The Moffats move effortlessly through the pages of the books and after we have read them all it is hard to believe that we have never met them in the flesh.

Eleanor Estes says that she never knew real Moffats but that they are composites of many children she knew when she was a children's librarian in West Haven, Connecticut. It would seem also that they are projections of her own childhood experiences. She must have lived through many of the school episodes, for example, to have them emerge so crystal clear. How the Moffats came about is unimportant; enough for us is the fact that they are here.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the Moffats is the wholesome family life—the security that came from knowing that they were wanted and loved. Equally important in this feeling of belonging is

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the fact that they loved each other and their mother, accepted responsibilities that came with their limited economic resources and shared what they had equally. At no time did they pity themselves or have bitterness defeat them. They were poor in material things but rich in spiritual and emotional satisfactions.

Their relations with their mother are filled with understanding. She never complained about having to support them, although her eyes must have ached many times and her back must have grown weary from long hours at the sewing machine. Her husband died when Rufus was a baby and she had moved to the Yellow House and started to sew to provide for the four children. Her courage became symbolized for her children in the bunch of violets on her hat that matched her eyes and the gloves she wore whenever she went out on the street. She told stories of her girlhood in New York City that the children loved, increasing their own store of memories by the richness of sharing hers. She could stop trying a dress on a customer for an instant to glance admiringly at the drawing of an autumn leaf Jane brought home on the day the art teacher made her fall visit to the school. She couldn't even speak, for her mouth was full of pins; but Jane knew that the drawing of the leaf would be put away in the box where Mama kept other small treasures like it from all the Moffat children. Many other children received fifty cents for each "Excellent" on their report cards but the Moffats had only a hug and a kiss as a reward and were satisfied. Perhaps nowhere in all the books does her tender understanding emerge more clear-

ly than in *The Moffats*. Rufus had been seriously ill with scarlet fever and Mrs. Moffat had not been able to do any sewing. Joe was sifting the ashes to save every precious bit of coal. Jane had developed a hole in her shoe and had inserted a card board in the sole to keep out the cold.

"Are we poverty stricken, Mama," Jane asked returning to the kitchen with the new sole comfortably in place.

"No, Janey, not poverty stricken," said Mama soberly, stroking Janey's cheek, "not poverty stricken, just. . ."

"Rich, then?" asked Jane.

"No, not rich either, nor well-to-do, just poor. . ." answered Mama.

That afternoon when Joe came home from school his Mother asked him to take his sled and go for a bushel of coal. She gave him her last money, a five dollar bill and told him to count the change carefully. Joe and Jane started through the bitter cold to the edge of the harbor where the coal yard was located. They had the burlap bag filled with coal on the sled and Joe fumbled with numbed fingers in his pocket for the worn purse. It was gone! "No money, no coal," said the man taking off the coal and dumping it again on the pile. The description of the two youngsters' miserable trip home looking everywhere along the way for the purse brings a lump to the throat of the reader. They went slowly into the house where the light from the kerosene lamp fell full on their unhappy faces. They could hear the whirr of their mother's sewing machine in the next room. She stopped and came into the living room.

"I lost the money," said Joe.

"Lost the money?" said Mama.

For a few seconds there was silence. . . Joe had never felt as miserable as this in his whole life. . . . The other Moffats, knowing how miserable he was feeling as he stood there with his hands stretched to the stove. . . felt scarcely less miserable.

Mama finally said, "Well, if it's gone, it's gone. We'll manage somehow."

A few minutes later Joe spied the little purse on the mantel where he had laid it while he put on his mittens. He and Jane ran through the darkness to the coal yard, arriving just as the yard was closing. Rushing with light hearts they found that supper was over but that Mama was making some fresh potato pancakes for them. "Too bad you had to go twice," she said stroking their cold cheeks.

It would have been so easy for a mother wornout with weeks of nursing and anxiety and the struggle with hard times to have snapped at Joe and to have added a feeling of guilt to the misery he already felt. Her strength went out to him. "We are in this together," she seemed to be saying. "You didn't mean to lose the money and we'll work this out together." Child readers who have parents who blame in sharp disappointment at small crises in family life, can gain comfort and understanding from this episode. Here is bibliotherapy in its finest sense.

Other adults in the books are more shadowy. Various teachers, the superintendent of schools, the chief of police, Mr. Abbot, the assistant curate, assorted members of the Browning Club and neighbors play their brief parts on the stage that is the children's world. It is right that they should be without much substance, for their existence was of little or no moment to the young Moffats. But the Oldest In-

habitant, now, that is another matter. Jane's friendship with him is one of the most charming things in the whole of *The Middle Moffat*. He was almost a hundred years old and the whole town was proud of him. He understood perfectly why Jane wished to be called the mysterious middle Moffat and just what little girls of Jane's age would like to do when she called on him. Her present of a hundred wilted bluets in a burr basket was as precious to him as the parade and the seven-story cake in honor of his one hundredth birthday.

It is with the children themselves that Eleanor Estes is most successful. Sylvia is scarcely a part of the solidarity that existed among Joe, Jane, and Rufus. She is already her mother's helper when we first meet the Moffats and her concerns are much more with adult life than with the world of adventure and enchantment that surrounded the rest, especially with the two youngest, Rufus and Jane. Joe sometimes shares their world in thorough small boy fashion. But he also shares the responsible world of reality that has opened on them all with the death of their father. He closes the shutters at night, locks the doors and keeps the coal scuttles filled and takes care of the stoves. He also earns money clearing snow from walks for the neighbors. He is a thoroughly convincing adolescent, however, and the accounts of his calling on his former teacher and plotting to scare Peter Frost with a ghostly visitor in the attic are sparkling with genuine boy fun.

There is a great deal of genuine fun in the books that provides readers with an opportunity to laugh at first contact and

to smile at remembrance. Probably the most hilarious episode concerns the time of the play in the Cranbury Town Hall to raise money for the new parish house. Mama had made the costumes and the heads for the Three Bears but when the curtain was about to go up, Jane, the middle bear, could not find her head. She shrank into her costume and tried not to let her head show. When the curtain went up, the audience saw the headless bear and went into howls of laughter at the sight of the middle bear's head resting on the bed-post! Jane retrieved it and put it on backwards! The audience laughed until tears came but somehow Jane knew that they were not laughing at her but at her predicament. Another chapter filled to the brim with good fun has the description of Jane's first attempt to play basketball although she knew nothing about the game. By playing a combination of "Tiddley-winks" and "In and Out the Window," Jane managed to help her side win in spite of popping buttons and dragging stockings.

There never was any preaching about sharing or taking turns but the Moffats almost always measured up. There was the sad day when Jane spent a whole nickle on herself for an ice cream cone. A nickle might have bought ten sticks of licorice, twenty caramels, or ten peppermint patties which could have been divided with all the Moffats, but

Somehow or other her feet marched her right over to the ice-cream counter. . . . Something inside had decided for her. A small, thin voice—Jane knew it was none of hers—said, "One ice-cream cone, please. Strawberry."

The ice-cream cone was absolutely de-

licious. At least the first few bites were delicious. But the more she ate, the less she enjoyed it. She found she couldn't eat the last few bites of the cone at all. . . . She thought of the bag of sweets she might have had. She could have surprised them all. Instead of that she was nothing but an old pig. She started for home, thoroughly ashamed and angry with herself. None of the others would have done such a thing. Well, she never would again, of that she was sure.

They accepted sharing as a part of the pattern of family living as is shown in this quotation from *Rufus M.*:

After Jane had mixed the margarine properly, Mama would divide it evenly into seven parts, one for each day of the week, because it had to last a week. Then she would divide each of the seven parts into five portions, one for each of the Moffats, and that small piece was supposed to be his share of butter for the day. It was always hard to decide whether to eat one slice of bread with plenty of butter on it and make it last all day. Sometimes the children decided one way and sometimes the other.

The children shared evenly the kittens that Catherine-the-cat obligingly produced in quartette form each year. They made a game of it. In many ways, their best fun came from the simple events of daily living tinged vividly with imagination.

Imagination is probably most vivid in Jane, "the mysterious, middle Moffat." Children can see themselves in her and adults return to the far off times when just to be alive was wonder enough. There was the time when she speculated about middles—

the middle of the earth was a mysterious place like the middle of the night and the middle of the ocean too where there very likely were waterspouts, whirlpools and mermaids. . . . The middle of the other



things was good, too. The middle of a sandwich and the middle of a pie. The middle of the night, when exciting things happened in books. The middle of the day, lunch time. The Middle Ages though what they were Jane was not quite certain.

What reader cannot understand her

looking a long time at Mama's face and thinking, "This is Mama;" looking and looking and thinking, "Who is Mama?" And the longer she'd look at Mama's face the stranger and more unfamiliar it would seem to her until she'd just have to rush to her, bury her face in her apron, and feel "This *is* Mama."

Mrs. Estes shows extraordinary sensitivity to the little things that mean so much to small children. The smells that delighted Rufus and Jane are familiar to all who can remember their own childhood. Jane's discovery that every home has its own odor, the lusty smell of tobacco on the empty bag the plumber gave to Rufus, the cold, damp smell of the unfloored cellar and the strange, musty smell of the attic, the odor of printer's ink on the newspaper, or hot, spicy odors from fresh gingerbread, the hearty, loved odor of pot roast with onions. The amazing change that can come about through turning the world upside down by the simple expedient of stooping over and looking between legs. Jane felt that everything had a different look altogether, a cleaner, brighter look. The possession of a picture postcard from France sent Rufus into transports of delight. It had come from the soldier who received Rufus' painfully knitted washrag and he carried it and the empty tobacco sack with him always.

Children who have worries will find identification with Jane and the others

when the "For Sale" sign was put on the Yellow House. Months of anxious waiting followed. The precious intimacy of familiar things—the grapes on the wall-paper, the pot-bellied stove in its corner, the yellow plush couch, the little room where Madame-the-Bust was stored—and aching dread of what the future might bring are shared by every reader.

Jane is shown with an honest reluctance toward growing up. To leave the security of small girlhood seemed almost too much for her.

She was thinking that some day she would be too old to run up the street and race with the trolley cars. She would have to walk like Mrs. Pudge. How could she bear that? And how could she bear never to play cops and robbers with the boys? Or never to walk fences? Or never to play baseball in the vacant lot? Imagine Mrs. Pudge or Mrs. Ellenback or any of the other women on New Dollar Street doing these things.

Yet she was able to convince herself that it would be a long time before she grew up. Years and years. And in the meantime there were many exciting adventures before she had to enter the sedate world of the grown-ups.

Rufus deserves special mention. Probably in all books for children he has no superior in his simple naturalness. Whether he is collecting teeth from the trash pile where a dentist had carelessly thrown them or taking the cardboard advertisement for a ride to the amusement park to see Jimmy, the pony on the merry-go-round, he is thoroughly convincing. Amid great riches one hesitates to point out favorite episodes but anyone who has missed Rufus' persistent attempts

to get his first library book, his Victory Garden, his first day at school, his frustrations in trying to be a ventriloquist or his adventures with the Invisible Piano Player have lost much that can add joy to their days.

Mrs. Estes has written other books. Especially deserving mention is *The Hundred Dresses*, a deeply sympathetic portrayal of a Polish immigrant girl, the butt of the thoughtless cruelty of the American girls in her room at school who did not realize until too late what it meant to Wanda to live on Boggins Heights, to wear a faded, badly ironed blue dress every day and to be teased about it when she was utterly defenseless except for her skill in drawing and painting that gave her the release of projection in making on paper the dresses she would like to have. "I have a hundred dresses all lined up in a closet at home," Wanda would maintain stoutly amid the hoots of derision led by Peggy. Mrs. Estes makes a powerful sermon that preaches itself and no child can miss it. Especially good is Maddie's realization that she was equally guilty with Peggy, the ringleader in teasing Wanda Petronski. Maddie had never actively joined in the teasing and the laughter but she had stood silently by, a coward who was afraid to tell the others that they were being mean. Maddie learned, too, the therapy that can come through trying to make amends. It is an unforgettable book.

*The Sun and the Wind and Mr. Todd* adds little or nothing to Eleanor Estes' reputation as a writer and a story teller. She has an interesting idea, viz, to specu-

late about the unknown traveler who was the victim of the test of superiority in Aesop's fable about the wind and the sun. The plot seems contrived and the characters unconvincing. If, as the foreword says, the purpose of the slight tale is to develop sympathy for all little men caught between forces they cannot control, it seems highly improbable that a child will understand the point. The book has a distinguished format and the strong illustrations of Louis Slobodkin are notable.

*The Sleeping Giant and Other Stories* has entertainment that many children enjoy. The three stories are sheer, delightful fantasy with moments of Puckish mischief. In the first story, the three hills that make up the slumbering giant become so annoyed with the citizens of Mt. Carmel, Connecticut, who permitted his head to be blasted open in the search for granite that he moved to the Pacific Ocean where he lay down on the International Date Line and by this position gave the settlers who came there "two birthdays, two Christmases and two of everything nice." The conversation with these citizens has a faint flavor of Lewis Carroll. The other stories, one of a little girl who lost her shadow, and the other about a giraffe named Gloria who came to live in the Hapgoods' living room do not quite measure up to the first one, but all in all, they satisfy one of the fundamental needs of children—that for change. Children can leave their own workaday world and laugh with Mrs. Estes merely by turning pages.

In *Ginger Pye*, selected for the 1952 Newbery Award, Eleanor Estes has turned

again to the portrayal of a family in Cranbury, Connecticut. Again there are three children. Jerry, Rachel, and their three year old uncle, Uncle Bennie. The parents and grandparents are stage props against which the children act out the year that is the framework of the activity covered in the book. The story is held together by Ginger, a dog, bought early in the book, whose mysterious disappearance is not solved until his return at the end of the book. The mystery gives the author an opportunity to build wholesome suspense that is believable. The story has a certain charm and warmth of family living,

especially in the brother and sister relationship. Their concern for their young uncle is tender without being sentimental. But the book suffers in the inevitable comparison with *The Moffats*, whose realistic and sharply etched identities we accept as we accept those of people we know and love. The *Moffats are*; they move through the pages of the books with effortless ease that shows none of the machinery of construction. They hold up a mirror to life and we find ourselves saying, "How could Eleanor Estes have known just how I felt?" Truly the *Moffats* are *Everychild*.

## *Two Studies of Children's Interest in TV*

PAUL WITTY<sup>1</sup>

"The prospect of 39,000,000 American families—each watching TV an average of four hours a day—is not one to be dismissed without further consideration.... Here is a tool comparable only to the invention of printing in its power to inform and to influence free thought."<sup>2</sup>

Recent studies of the amount of television on the part of children and youth show that this strong interest is persisting. Several studies reported a year or two ago, revealed that children in the primary grades spent on the average four hours per day with TV while middle grade pupils averaged about three hours daily. It was predicted by some observers that, when the novelty had worn off, children would spend less time with TV. That this prediction may not have been realized is suggested by recent reports of the amount of television in Cincinnati. Thus *Time* (January 7, 1952) cites an investigation by Walter Clark showing that

"the average 12-and 10-year old spends 3.7 hours every school day before the screen. Over a week he is apt to spend 30 hours—five more than he spends in school."

The following quotation suggests that interest in TV is also very great among rural children:

A rural school teacher in one of our (Iowa) meetings said, "Do you know what has happened in my one-room rural school? Ninety per cent of the farm families in this area have television sets. The other ten per cent will have them next month. I had to get one in self-protection. A great deal of my teaching is done across

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, Northwestern University, and well-known as a psychologist and expert on reading and the mass media of communication.

<sup>2</sup>Clinton P. Anderson, United States Senator from New Mexico, quoted in *TV Channels for Education*, Joint Committee on Educational Television, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., 1951, p. 7.

the road in a neighboring farmhouse that has a television set."<sup>3</sup>

This paper includes a report of the amount of time devoted to TV by Evanston, (Illinois) children, their parents, and their teachers in 1951. This report contains the names of the favorite programs as well as the reactions of the children and the adults to certain values and limitations of current offerings. It presents also a comparison of the results of this study with those of a similar investigation made in 1950.

#### *1950 Survey of TV in the Elementary School<sup>4</sup>*

Statements concerning TV were obtained from 2100 elementary school pupils in April and May, 1950. At this time, 43 per cent of the pupils had TV sets in their homes. In the homes where TV sets were owned, the average time given to televiewing was three hours daily, while a little over an hour and one-half was devoted to TV by children from homes in which there were no sets. These pupils reported that they spent much less time listening to the radio than in televiewing, and that they went to the movies less often on the average than formerly.

About seventy per cent of the boys and girls stated that TV did not help them with their school work. On the other hand about thirty per cent believed that TV helped.

The relationship between intelligence and amount of televiewing was ascertained. The IQ's of pupils in grades three to six were correlated with the hours devoted to TV. The size of the coefficients was insignificant in every grade. There was also very little relationship between educational test results and amount of

televiewing. Excessive viewing of TV, however, seemed to be associated with somewhat lower academic attainment.

Over 1700 replies were received from the parents. Fifty-five per cent of TV owners approved children's programs; 25 per cent endorsed certain programs. In contrast, only 16 per cent of the non-owners approved children's programs. As the outstanding reasons for approval, parents cited the entertainment and educational values of TV. As reasons for disapproval, they stressed the fact that children read less, and that many programs were too sensational and overstimulating. Western movies were shown too often, they said. Moreover, the excessive amount of time devoted to TV left little opportunity for outdoor recreation and desirable physical activity.

Forty-eight per cent of the teachers expressed dissatisfaction with TV. Twenty-seven per cent recognized some serious limitations in TV at present but acknowledged its promise. Among the limitations frequently mentioned were the low standard of the educational offerings and the poor quality of the entertainment. About half of the teachers cited minor or serious behavior problems associated with TV; for example, increased nervousness on the part of some children, drowsiness and disinterest, and a decrease of interest in reading. Some of the parents mentioned similar problems and stressed particularly the undesirable influence of TV on reading and study habits. Nevertheless, some parents and teachers emphasized the value of TV in extending and enriching interests. Others mentioned improvement in home relationships. Teachers and parents alike stressed the positive influence of some TV programs.

#### *Second Study of TV — One Year Later*

In May, 1951, the first study was repeated by sending questionnaires to the children, their parents and their teachers in three schools of Evanston. One of these schools is in a community below average in socio-economic status,

<sup>3</sup>Arthur H. Moehlman, State University of Iowa. Quoted in *TV Channels for Education*, 1951, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Appreciation is expressed for the cooperation of Superintendent Oscar Chute, Mrs. Dorothy Brown, Mrs. Mary Shaw, and Miss Phyllis Bland in these studies.



another is in a superior district, and the third is in a typical or average community. The enrollment in one of the schools consists almost entirely of colored children.

About 1400 children answered the questionnaires. Additional forms were submitted to their parents and their teachers.

The average length of ownership of TV

sets was one year, six months. There was an increase (from 43 per cent to 68 per cent) in the ownership of TV sets. However, the per cent of teachers having TV sets remained low—26 per cent.

Table I shows the amount of time given to TV by the children, their parents, and their teachers.

TABLE I  
AVERAGE TIME SPENT TELEVIEWING BY CHILDREN,  
PARENTS, AND TEACHERS (OWNERS)

	Week Days	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly
Children .....	2.4 hours	4.1 hours	3.4 hours	19.5 hours
Parents .....	2.6 "	2.9 "	3.2 "	19.1 "
Teachers .....	1.5 "	2.3 "	2.7 "	12.5 "

There were slightly larger numbers of TV sets in the lower socio-economic district than in the higher district. And the colored children spent slightly more time with TV than did the other pupils.

Among pupils having TV sets, a decrease of about 12 per cent in the amount of televiewing transpired during the year after the set was purchased. During the second year of ownership there was a slight additional decrease. Children frequently mentioned that they watched television less during the spring and summer than during the winter months.

There was no significant difference between the boys and the girls in the amount of time spent televiewing.

Forty-three per cent of the parents reported that they watched television between the hours of 12 noon and 3:30 p. m., although most popular hours were from 7:00 to 10:00 p. m. daily and during Sunday afternoon. A few parents reported the use of television after 12 midnight. Televiewing for children was heaviest during the dinner and after-dinner hours—from 6:30 to 8:30. Since this period is later than the time many children's programs are presented, it appears that adult programs form a large part of children's fare on TV.

Forty-nine per cent of the children who had

TV at home indicated that they attended movies less often than they did before TV appeared; however, they went to the movies a little less than once each week on the average, at the time of the second study.

Sixty per cent of the parents approved children's television programs, nine per cent disapproved, and about thirty per cent endorsed a selected number only. Approximately sixty-five per cent of the teachers approved television for their pupils, and about thirty per cent expressed disapproval. The teachers qualified their approval by stressing the children's need for supervision and guidance in the selection of programs and in the amount of time spent televiewing. They pointed out, too, that individual differences should determine the kinds of schedules followed by different children. The reasons given by the teachers for approving children's programs included mention of entertainment and educational values. The teachers who disapproved of TV mentioned the paucity of superior educational programs, the excessive amount of time some children devote to TV, the neglect of more wholesome activities, and the undesirable effect of some TV programs upon the child's physical and mental health. As reasons for disapproval of television programs, the parents cited the high frequency with which violence and aggression are found

in TV programs. They mentioned too some undesirable effects upon the child's physical development as well as upon his pattern of recreation. One discouraged parent commented: "The sad truth is that we have raised a generation of people who are so unresourceful that they welcome television to relieve their boredom. Now we are raising another generation that is going to be one step further. What will happen to our national vitality?"

The children were asked to suggest the kind of programs they would like to see added to television. The older pupils agreed that they would like to have more recently made movies, more current event offerings (especially about U. S. government), more musical programs, and more scientific presentations. The middle grade children wanted more pictures about pioneers and movies about foreign lands and people. The lower grade pupils requested more children's plays, and offerings depicting hobbies and crafts.

Parents, too, indicated their desire for a larger number of superior children's programs, musical offerings, as well as better reporting of news and political events.

Teachers listed the following types of programs which they would like to see added for their pupils: 1) dramatics; 2) musical shows, both classical and light opera; 3) news and current events, especially related to civic affairs; 4) how-to-do, hobby, and special interest shows; 5) story telling; and 6) science programs.

The teachers listed Mr. Wizard (science program), *Zoo Parade*; *Quiz Kids*; *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*; *News Caravan* or *Watch the World* (John Swayze); and *Pathways of the World*; as desirable programs for children. They cited the give-away shows, mysteries, murders, adult movies, cowboy pictures, and amateur programs as especially undesirable. They mentioned *Captain Video*, *Murder Before Midnight*, *Man Against Crime*, *Roller Derby*, *Star Theater*

(Milton Berle), and *Lights Out* as the least desirable programs for children.

As least desirable for children, the following programs were cited by parents: mysteries, cowboy pictures, *Captain Video*, *Tom Corbett Space Cadet*, *Lights Out*, "poor" movies, and *Hopalong Cassidy*.

Following in Table II are lists of the children's favorite programs.

TABLE II  
FAVORITE PROGRAMS OF CHILDREN  
(by grades)

Lower Grades (1-3)

1. Howdy Doody Show
2. Uncle Mistletoe
3. Hopalong Cassidy
4. Star Theater (Milton Berle)
5. Paul Winchell—Jerry Mahoney
6. Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok
7. Super Circus  
Gene Autry Show
8. Captain Video  
Range Rider  
Lone Ranger
9. Cactus Jim  
Crusader Rabbit
10. Paul Whiteman Revue  
Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts  
Arthur Godfrey and his Friends  
Small Fry Club  
Kids Karnival Kwiz

Middle Grades (4-6)

1. Crusader Rabbit
2. Paul Whiteman Revue
3. Movies for Kids (Flash Gordon)
4. Your Show of Shows  
Comedy Hour (Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis)  
Kukla, Fran and Ollie
5. Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok
6. Lone Ranger  
Tom Corbett Space Cadet
7. Kids Karnival Kwiz  
Mama
8. Captain Video  
Hopalong Cassidy  
One Man's Family
9. Beulah Show (Ethel Waters)  
Cavalcade of Bands
10. Super Circus  
Paul Whiteman's TV Teen Club

## Upper Grades (7-8)

1. Comedy Hour (Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis)
2. Your Show of Shows
3. Your Hit Parade
4. Martin Kane—Private Eye
5. Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts  
Arthur Godfrey and his Friends
6. Kukla, Fran, and Ollie
7. Tom Corbett Space Cadet  
One Man's Family
8. Star Theater (Milton Berle)
9. Kraft Theater
10. Fred Waring Show  
Zoo Parade

Table III shows the ten programs that parents believe are desirable for children.

TABLE III  
PROGRAMS WHICH PARENTS FEEL ARE  
DESIRABLE FOR CHILDREN

- |      |                              |
|------|------------------------------|
| Rank |                              |
| 1.   | Super Circus                 |
| 2.   | Kukla, Fran and Ollie        |
| 3.   | Zoo Parade                   |
| 4.   | Howdy-Doody Show             |
| 5.   | Uncle Mistletoe              |
| 6.   | Mama                         |
| 7.   | Paul Whiteman's TV Teen Club |
| 8.   | Mr. I. Magination            |
| 9.   | Quiz Kids                    |
| 10.  | Sports                       |

The teachers ranked their favorite programs in the order found in Table IV.

TABLE IV  
FAVORITE PROGRAMS OF TEACHERS

1. What's My Line?
2. Current events and news
3. Fred Waring Show
4. Your Show of Shows
5. Toast of the Town (Ed Sullivan)
6. Who Said That?
7. Studio One
8. Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts  
Arthur Godfrey and his Friends
9. Weatherman (Clint Youle)
10. Drama and theater

A somewhat different order of preference from that of the teachers was found in the parents' list of favorite programs. (See Table V.)

TABLE V  
FAVORITE PROGRAMS OF PARENTS

1. Arthur Godfrey programs
2. Fred Waring Show
3. Star Theater (Milton Berle)
4. Sports
5. Mama  
What's My Line?
6. Studio One
7. Garroway at Large  
Your Show of Shows  
Clifton Utley
8. Amateur Shows  
Twenty Questions  
Voice of Firestone
9. Beulah Show (Ethel Waters)  
News programs
10. Toast of the Town (Ed Sullivan)

About one third of the children said that they saw programs that helped with their school work particularly with the reading assignments in science, history, English and current events. Table VI shows the programs which they mentioned as being helpful.

TABLE VI  
PROGRAMS WHICH CHILDREN BELIEVE  
ARE HELPFUL WITH THEIR  
SCHOOL WORK

1. Quiz programs  
Quiz Kids  
Twenty Questions  
Who Said That?
2. News and comments on news
3. Movies  
Biographies and historical presentations  
Travelogues
4. Spelling bees
5. Programs about animals such as *Zoo Parade*
6. Programs about science such as *Mr. Wizard*

### *The Effect of Television on Reading*

Fifty per cent of the children who had television sets at home said that they would rather watch TV than read; twenty-one per cent said that they preferred to read; seventeen per cent were undecided, twelve per cent did not reply.

The children reported that they read less

since the advent of TV. More than forty per cent indicated that the total amount of their reading had decreased.

There appeared to be little change in the amount of reading of comic magazines since the advent of TV. The average number of comic magazines read regularly by the middle-grade pupils was about six; for the older pupils in the junior school, the average was four.

Many of the teachers expressed their uncertainty concerning the effect of TV on their pupils' reading. Thirty per cent said that it had no effect on the ability to read. However, thirty-six per cent believed that TV had affected their pupils' ability in reading; thirty-five per cent indicated it had cut down on the amount of reading, and twenty-four per cent said they noticed a change in the patterns of reading.

#### *Guidance in the Use of TV*

Twenty-nine per cent of the parents believed that TV created problems in the home. Forty-three per cent did not think that TV created problems and twenty-eight per cent gave no answer. Those who believed that TV created problems gave the following reasons: 1) TV makes it difficult to get children into bed, 2) the programs interfere with mealtime schedules, and 3) TV causes discord in the family over choice of programs. Other problems included: excessive time spent in televiewing, disinterest in practicing lessons or doing homework, over-stimulation of some programs and lack of time for family conversations.

Although forty-six per cent of the parents stated that they guided their children's choice of TV programs, only twenty-five per cent of the children reported that direction was received at home. Less than ten per cent indicated that guidance was offered in school. One third of the pupils alleged that TV programs were never discussed in their classes. This may be traceable, in part at least, to the relatively small percentage of teachers who have TV sets as well as to the fact that the teacher owners

do not watch TV during the hours when children's programs are being telecast.

Television does not seem to be as controversial an issue as it was in 1950. Ownership figures have increased and with this the resistance to TV seems to have decreased somewhat. It seems that TV is being assimilated into family living; a somewhat larger number of parents are accepting TV without question now and are providing counsel and guidance for their children.

#### *Summary and Concluding Remarks*

The results of the studies reported in this article show that TV is maintaining its hold upon children. Moreover, the number of TV owners is increasing. A survey made in 1950 and repeated in 1951 in the Evanston schools showed that in 1951, sixty-eight per cent of the pupils had TV sets in their homes, as compared with forty-three per cent the preceeding year. The average amount of time devoted to TV by the pupils was nineteen hours per week in 1951 as compared with twenty-one hours in 1950. The primary children continue to be the most avid and enthusiastic viewers. Parents, too, continue to devote a large amount of time to TV although the amount has decreased somewhat—from twenty-four to nineteen hours per week.

Only twenty-six per cent of the teachers report having TV available; they spend an average of twelve and one-half hours per week in televiewing. It is of interest that few of them state that they watch children's programs; perhaps this fact accounts for the small amount of TV guidance given children in many classrooms.

Parents and children who have had TV sets for more than one year estimate that they spend less time televiewing than they did during the first year of ownership. When allowance is made for the increase of owners, it appears that televiewing decreases about twelve per cent during the first year of ownership, and another two per cent during the second year.



At the time of these surveys teachers and parents cited advantages and disadvantages of having TV sets in the home. Problems attending televiewing were similar in both studies, but their incidence was smaller in the 1951 survey. In spite of the shortcomings of many programs, both teachers and parents recognize unparalleled educational potentialities in TV. About one-third of the pupils stated that TV helped them with their work in subjects such as English, history, science and current events. On the other hand, many of the pupils asserted that TV did not help, and stated that TV provided a strong temptation to take their time and attention from homework. Forty-nine per cent said that they attended the movies less frequently than before they had TV at home. More than forty per cent of these pupils indicated that they read less now that they have access to TV. Comic books were reported to be read almost as frequently as before TV.

These studies suggest that children's strong interest in television may be a liability or an asset. Criticisms of parents and teachers are similar to strictures directed in former years against the comics, the radio and the movies. The complaints reflect a feeling that the growing interest in TV will influence reading and study habits adversely and will cause children and young people to read less and to choose materials of inferior quality and doubtful value. Moreover many parents and teachers believe that excessive interest in TV may divert the child from participation in wholesome recreation and in desirable physical activities.

The antidote lies in the provision of a constructive program of guidance. In working together on such a program the following suggestions are offered parents and teachers:

1. Examine the recreational opportunities

of your school and your community. Try to offer boys and girls abundant opportunities for varied play activities and creative pursuits of many kinds.

2. Study the children in your class or home and try to understand their varied needs. Find out the programs they are seeing on TV. And ascertain the time given to the radio and to the movies. Discuss the merits and limitations of favorite programs. Make a study of other leisure activities in which children engage. Offer constructive suggestions so as to bring about balanced programs of recreation.

3. Set up a family or school council to suggest effective ways of budgeting time.

4. Help children develop more efficient reading habits and skills so that they will enjoy the act of reading as well as the results. Study children's interests. Try to provide a varied assortment of reading materials to satisfy and extend wholesome interests.

5. Discuss good books with children and try to relate favorite programs on TV to good reading.

6. Recognize the fact that the satisfactions obtained from TV are similar to those derived from the movies, the radio, and comic books. Become acquainted with these media and give whatever individual or group guidance is needed in each area.

7. Lead children to read critically, to listen discriminatingly, and to evaluate the worth of pictured presentations offered in TV and through other media.

8. Strive to improve the offerings on TV and radio. At the present time there is still a unique opportunity for parents and teachers to participate in a national movement aiming at the development of superior educational offerings on TV.

# When Children Make Mistakes in Spelling

MILDRED E. SWEARINGEN<sup>1</sup>

When children make mistakes in spelling, what is the nature of their errors? As teachers, we have usually been concerned over the frequency of error in a child's spelling and have perhaps tended to overlook the fundamental importance of the nature of the errors being made. Yet, it is through a careful examination of the kinds of errors made that we might hope to note similarities in difficulty from child to child and discern consistencies in errors for the same child, thereby obtaining clues as to where to direct the effort for improvement. Knowing the frequency of error is helpful in ascertaining the child's status in spelling, but it is insufficient for planning the next phases of learning with any degree of economy of time and effort for pupil and teacher.

It is a familiar fact that words spelled correctly when written from dictated lists may be spelled incorrectly later in informal writing, and vice versa. It is also commonly observed that many spelling errors are the result of haste and carelessness rather than ignorance of the sequence of letters. The question naturally arises as to why the child's knowledge of the word, or at least his use of that knowledge, is unreliable. The *when* of error then becomes significant; that is, the context or the situational conditions in which the spelling takes place must have a bearing on the errors made, and it is this bearing or relationship which needs to be recognized and its nature explored. The question may be phrased, "Under what condi-

tions or in what situations does the child care enough to spell correctly?"

A faculty which was engaged in evaluative study of its school program (Southside Elementary School, Sarasota, Florida) became concerned over the persistence of difficulty in the area of spelling. The faculty began to question the conditions conducive to good or poor spelling, the role of purpose, and the possible influence of basic maturation. In spite of much time and conscientious effort devoted to spelling instruction in the past, the results in pupil achievement had been disappointing to the faculty. At the same time, some parents were expressing dissatisfaction over the apparently low level of achievement and were going so far as to assert that lack of phonetic training was the cause of the unsatisfactory spelling. A few teachers were also wondering about the adequacy of phonetic skill, in spite of the fact that they knew phonetic analysis of words to be an important part of the reading, language, and spelling activities of the late primary and intermediate years. As the members of the faculty weighed their current efforts and sought means of improvement, they came to a realization of their need for more information.

They knew from the previous use of standardized achievement tests that while the accomplishment of pupils fluctuated slightly from year to year, it was only a little below the national norms in the

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third through the sixth grades. But information as to the kinds of errors made and the conditions that encouraged or discouraged error was lacking. Thereupon the members of the faculty evolved a plan of informal research that would give them some objective evidence upon which to base a plan of action for improvement. They felt that such information would make possible sharpening the focus and direction of effort toward improvement, thereby making the work proportionately more effective than earnest but less discriminating endeavor.

#### *A Plan for Action Research*

In seeking information the faculty planned to analyze the spelling work of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade pupils under four different situations: 1) standardized achievement tests, 2) lists of commonly recognized spelling demons, 3) informal tests of words from spelling textbooks, 4) samples of the children's writing from their stories, compositions, and letters.

From the analysis, the faculty hoped to gain specific information regarding the kinds of mistakes, the similarity or differences in mistakes when children spell from lists or in purposeful writing, the similarity or difference in frequency of error as between list spelling and purposeful writing, the role of phonetic skill in spelling, the possible effect of physical limitations such as hearing and speech irregularities, and the similarities or differences in errors between the younger and older pupils.

#### *The Findings*

When the errors in achievement test words (list spelling) were arranged in

categories, the nature of the mistakes stood out. Omissions (apostrophes, capitals, silent letters as in *cach* for *catch* or one of a pair as in *suden* for *sudden*) accounted for many errors. Substitutions, usually phonetic, (*rane* for *rain*, *kar* for *care*, *plas* for *place*) accounted for the other large block. The per cent of error in different categories was as follows:

#### KINDS OF ERRORS MADE IN LIST SPELLING

Type of Error	Grade 3	Grade 6
Omissions	37%	48%
Substitutions, including phonetic substitutions	46%	43%
Reversals	7%	3%
Insertions and additions	7%	6%
Incorrect pronunciation	3%	—

Samplings from the fourth and fifth grades gave corresponding results.

When spelling errors made in purposeful writing were grouped in like categories, the results were very similar.

#### KINDS OF SPELING ERRORS MADE IN PURPOSEFUL WRITING

Type of Error	Grade 3
Omissions	37%
Substitutions, including phonetic substitutions	46%
Reversals	10%
Additions	7%
Incorrect pronunciation	—

In both situations, list spelling and purposeful writing, the errors were concentrated into two kinds: omissions and substitutions, with many of the substitutions being intelligent applications of

phonetic knowledge. Thus, *erlee* for *early*, *ourwer* for *hour*, *apon* for *upon*, were all respectably spelled if phonetics alone were a sufficient guide in spelling.

With respect to frequency of misspelled words in purposeful writing, two findings were of significance. First, the errors in relationship to running words were fewer than the faculty and parents had supposed; second, the number of errors decreased in the later elementary grades.

#### ERRORS IN SPELLING IN RELATIONSHIP TO NUMBER OF RUNNING WORDS USED

Grade Three	5%
Grade Four	6%
Grade Five	3%
Grade Six	3%

The decrease in error in the later elementary grades was heartening in view of the fact that it is during this same time that a child's vocabulary expands rapidly with respect to far away places, events, and times. In his writing he therefore attempts to use many new or only slightly familiar words and the chance for error is great.

It is sometimes pointed out that in any analysis of purposeful writing based on children's stories and letters, the results are influenced by the fact that the writer naturally avoids using words he knows he cannot spell. While this factor doubtless operated in some measure, the teachers pointed out that the stories and letters were written freely and for a purpose, and without such undue reminders to spell correctly as would have induced the children to be self-conscious or defensive in

their choice of words. The teachers also noted, in making the analysis, that the majority of errors were not with new or technical words, such as names of shells in several stories. The children seemed to feel a responsibility for looking up strange words if they were in doubt. Rather, the errors were with words long used in their writing and speech.

#### Observations and Conclusions

Through their analysis and study the faculty arrived at the following observations and conclusions:

1. Spelling is better when purpose and interest in writing are apparent. It was the opinion of the group that there were fewer spelling errors when words were used in context than when lists were dictated.
2. Most of the children develop an attitude of wanting to spell correctly in purposeful writing. They show disgust with themselves for carelessness. "Well, I *knew* that. I just didn't notice," was frequently heard among the older children. It is when children recognize the genuineness of the need for writing, as in a letter of thanks to a bakery where a tour had just been completed, that the trouble to be accurate seems really worth the effort.
3. Building sensitivity to words and establishing the habit or expectation of looking up doubtful ones is a schoolwide undertaking.
4. Kinds of errors are very similar whether in purposeful writing or



list spelling. Omissions and phonetic substitutions are by far the most frequent types of errors.

5. Words are recognizable even when misspelled. An attempt to spell phonetically is usually obvious. Even *grog* for *garage* is understandable.
6. Many errors appear to be traceable to incorrect pronunciation, poor enunciation, indistinct hearing, inattentive listening, or speech irregularities. *Tace* for *taste*, *kine* for *kind*, *lage* for *leg*, *buttade* for *potato*, *spwing* for *spring* are examples.
7. Many poor spellers write the initial consonants correctly but can not complete the word.
8. Very few children write words without some apparent thought of phonetics or meaning.
9. The most frequent error of the better spellers is the omission of letters; for instance, *erly* for *early*, *tast* for *taste*, *pant* for *paint*.
10. Uncertainty in letter formation (b for d) and in the use of capitals and the apostrophe accounts for many errors.
11. There is a decrease in the amount of error as children live longer in their spelling-conscious culture.

#### *A Plan of Action*

To incorporate these conclusions into its work for the year, the faculty evolved the following plan of action:

- to have increased faith in the conviction that children learn spelling best when they have a genuine need to write
- to increase the number of opportunities for purposeful writing in future activities
- to analyze with children, in groups and individually, the kinds of errors they are making, thus involving the child's sense of responsibility for his own improvement and at the same time giving focus and direction to his effort
- to emphasize discriminating listening
- to give hearing acuity tests so as to locate hearing irregularities and work toward their correction
- to locate speech irregularities which might influence spelling and work toward their correction
- to concentrate the work with phonics, not upon mass drill situations, but upon 1) familiar and new words which are consistent phonetically and for which children need assurance and self-confidence, 2) those words of frequent use having more than one phonic possibility and for which the child must learn the culturally accepted form
- to work continuously toward an attitude of willingness to look up doubtful words in a dictionary, recognizing that this procedure is used by editors and other responsible adults

—to share with parents the information derived from this analysis and help them realize that, as children live longer in their culture, they learn more of the accepted ways of spelling. The nine year old child,

away at his first summer camp, may write home about the day-long *rane*, but at twelve the same child will probably have conformed to his culture and write of the *rain*.

## *Modern Spelling is Integrated*

KATHERINE B. PEAVY<sup>1</sup>

It is only during the past century and a half that any attempt has been made to standardize spelling. Indeed, relatively little was actually written in the English language at all before the Elizabethan age. So, considering the comparatively short time that written form has been used to any extent (if we are to consider the age of civilization) it is small wonder that the English language is still changing so rapidly that a complete standardization of writing form has not been completely accomplished. The dictionary is full of alternate spellings of words in common usage, and new words are being added so constantly that a dictionary is obsolete in a matter of years.

All this information, interesting as it is, only makes for complications in the teaching of spelling. Our general aim, as teachers, is to lead the child to conform as nearly as possible to the current accepted spelling form. Our specific aim is to help him master the spelling curricula as laid out by the Course of Study. Even more specifically, we try to goad him into mastering a set number of words each week.

The pupil's aim is something else

again. In general, this is to do as little studying as possible, to resist all spelling aids, to defy all spelling rules, and to struggle to the utmost to grow up in abject ignorance.

And because teachers are ever hopeful, we do the best we can with the highly complicated commodity with which we are working and apply it to the resisting subject as painlessly as possible. Occasionally, we are able to conjure up an even palatable manner of serving it. I have even known teachers who could make spelling fun—for a while.

Not too long ago (and some teachers still cling to the practice) reading, spelling, and writing were taught as separate subjects, quite unrelated to each other. However, we are coming to consider spelling as inter-related with every other subject in the curriculum, and the trend is toward closer and closer correlation. We now recognize the fact that some pupils who are good readers are poor spellers, due to any number of possible reasons, and, generally speaking, a poor reader is usually a poor speller.

Better teaching of word recognition

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in reading involves first, the teaching of a large number of sight words which the child learns to manipulate in several ways. He knows what the word looks like, he can say it when he sees it, he knows what it means, and he can use it in context. A little later, he learns to distinguish between name words and words that do something, or words that give different meaning to certain things. If he is sent to get a ball, for example, and there are two balls and he is asked to bring the red one, he learns that the color makes the ball different from other balls. So he knows the difference between name words and descriptive words.

Presently, he finds that the letters that go to make up the words he knows have names too, and that those letter names signify both the sounds and the shapes of letters. Then he is able to write long lists of words he knows, and suddenly somebody calls it spelling. During the entire process, which has been taking place a little at a time ever since he entered school, the child is learning in four ways: He sees the material, he hears it, he says it and he does it, or writes it.

About twenty years ago, phonics suddenly fell into grave disrepute. Children ceased to be taught to find out how to pronounce or spell a word according to the way it sounded, and were taught by sight only. As a result, we have had a generation of poor readers and atrocious spellers from all but the pupils who seemed to be born with a natural ability to spell and read—we will always have a few, regardless of teaching methods. The high schools complained bitterly. The colleges and uni-

versities are still complaining.

### *The Swing of the Pendulum*

Came the War, and many retired teachers, who were trained in the Age of Phonics, were impressed back into service, and with them they brought their "old fashioned" methods. The swing in teaching reading had already started hesitantly back the other way, and now we have a modification of both systems, a pliable happy medium which seems to be achieving better results than either system ever had in itself. Sight words are taught, but attention is called to the way a word is built up, and the letters and syllables in it.

When the need for spelling arises, present day children are taught to spell. If a word is phonetic, it is taught as such. If not, it is merely a sight word. Words are taken apart and the component parts are examined, then assembled again into an integrated whole. And so, spelling becomes a natural outgrowth of reading, and the child discovers that it is a useful tool for self expression. He finds joy in learning to write down what he thinks. He is thus finding a practical use for the words he has learned, and is becoming increasingly aware of his independent power over words.

The study of spelling is no longer a monotonous repetition of letters repeated orally, or a tedious writing of the word over and over again until it is learned. The modern approach is a group activity led often by pupils themselves which follows a somewhat set pattern. First, the word is pronounced clearly by the teacher, then by the class. Enunciation and articulation are important, for the pupil

must hear the word correctly. Attention is called to hard spots, then the word is written in syllables, for the next step is seeing it correctly. Sometimes it helps to have pupils close their eyes and try to conjure up a mental image of the way it looks, then repeat it.

The next step is an association. How does the word resemble another familiar word in letter combinations, in length, and possibly in origin? Where are the trouble spots? What does the word suggest? What association to an activity, object, or something else familiar does the pupil have with the word?

At this point, someone may come up with a definition, and the word is put into context as pupils put it into sentences of their own making. The part of speech is then determined, and what changes in the form of the word would be made to make it another part of speech, if it is upper grade classes studying a lesson.

Sometimes words that seem to be related can be grouped together, and the spelling lesson can be used as a point of departure for ideas for original stories. Attention is called frequently to words met in other subjects that have been previously studied in a spelling lesson.

#### *Seeing a Purpose in Spelling*

Pupils are willing to accept spelling as a necessary evil if they can see a sound, sensible reason for learning to spell. It becomes important if the pupil sees in it a need, if for no other reason to get on the honor roll, to win a prize, or in the case of older students, to get and hold a job. Importance of prizes is questionable, al-

though there are cases where it is a real incentive, particularly if the pupil is being induced to take greater pride in his work. Individual graphs of spelling scores which, over a period of months, show a profile of his work, are a device that intrigues some children.

In surveys described by McKee, the modern classroom attempts to teach fewer words, but to teach them more thoroughly. A generation ago it was not unusual for schools to expect pupils in the upper grades to memorize from ten to twenty five words per day, with little thought of their correlated use to the curriculum, or to method of teaching other than oral or written repetition.

But in recent years, scholarly attempts have been made by Thorndike, Dolch, and others to discover the words most commonly used by pupils of various grade levels, and to grade spelling lists according to these findings. Workbook type spellers, now almost universal, put new words into context and help the pupil to form an immediate association as to meaning. Present day classrooms allow children to work together in pairs for study. Children tend to group themselves according to their own needs, set up their own study plans and learn, each to his own individual fashion. Some are auditory, some are visual, and others a little of both, and study techniques must allow for these variations. Administration of this system is at the discretion of each teacher, and is handled according to the temper of each particular class.

There are countless devices for securing better spelling results, and there is



scarcely a teacher in the profession who hasn't a number of such plans that work. The newer spellers often include spelling games and puzzles which, if approached in the spirit of fun, are enjoyed by the class and something of value can be gained from the activity. One of the most popular features of some of the better junior weekly news magazines is the cross-word puzzles. Teachers' magazines are full of ideas worked out by classroom teachers, which any teacher would do well to clip and save for future reference.

But all such plans and devices are based upon the same principle: that of securing and holding the attention of a class and instilling in each pupil what Greene calls a "spelling conscience." This is a realization of the import of incorrect spelling which will lead the pupil to be purposeful in his attempt to learn to spell correctly, which, in the final analysis, is really the desire of the pupil to grow in the use and understanding of the language he speaks.

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## *That Straw Man: The Spelling List*

THOMAS D. HORN<sup>1</sup>

One of the recent statements of modern thought concerning methods in spelling and the selection of words in spelling is, "A child's immediate writing needs determine his first word lists. As the child writes something he needs or wants to write, he asks for the spelling of words he cannot spell for himself. The teacher supplies the spelling he needs. . . . Later, the teacher selects the words the child should copy into his individual spelling notebook and learn to spell. Only words he will need to use are copied into the notebook; words needed only for this subject or occasion, or words that are particularly difficult, will be supplied by the teacher as they are needed. In this way, each child studies and practices only the words *he needs to learn*; there is no boring practice on known words and no practice on words because he 'will need them some day'."<sup>2</sup>

A great many teachers would probably accept this description of beginning spelling method. Although this might be a logical start, just as "telling" is used in beginning reading, there comes a time when the child must attain independent power in learning to spell. The "how" of this independence has produced both pertinent and irrelevant argumentation. Also, debate is spirited in regard to just which words children need to know how to spell.

The attention to child need has been accepted by most spelling authorities, but it has become almost a fetish with a great many workers in elementary education. There is little to argue about concerning the principle that a child should study the words he needs to learn. The emotional

<sup>1</sup>Associate professor of Education, the University of Texas.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Strickland. *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*. p. 214. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951.

turmoil of some educators concerning this is amazing. *Of course the child should learn those words he needs to learn.* The question is just how these needs are best identified.

It is quite typical in the profession to look at word selection in spelling as child *versus* adult needs. Often as not, you hear the study by Horn<sup>3</sup> paired off against that by Rinsland.<sup>4</sup> If we are supposed to use research intelligently, we must follow the research we have, recognizing the limitations of each study. In this case, an intelligent conclusion might well be to utilize both studies. The result could be to use those words which have high potency in regard to child needs and which are *also* high in adult needs. The profitless "either-or" approach to word selection has been going on for some time, though the overlap between child and adult vocabularies has been noted.<sup>5</sup>

For several years we have been in the throes of the list *versus* context presentation of spelling words. Once more, if we are to follow the research available, rather than opinion, the list presentation would be used.<sup>6</sup> Again, the emotional response to the word "list" is almost as great as that connected with "progressive" and

"traditional."

Strickland recognizes the intelligent use of lists when she says, "As children reach the stage when they do more writing, there will be some basic words which all of them should learn. Second and third grade children need basic lists of words which all children study, as well as the individual lists which fit each child's needs."<sup>7</sup> The suggestion here is not the "either-or" approach, but the basic list *as well as* the individual needs.

In fact, one of the purposes of the research on written and spoken vocabularies is to identify the words which are needed and so free the teacher from having to start from scratch each year with each pupil. It shouldn't be hard to understand that research has tried to locate individual needs and that the pupil's "very own" words can many times be anticipated.

The term "child need" has too often been distorted when applied to the selection of spelling words. For example, all one needs to do is to look over the current spelling texts and see the widespread method of introducing spelling words through reading material, despite research to the contrary.<sup>8</sup>

The need to spell arises from the writing, *not* the reading. The most significant

<sup>7</sup>Ruth Strickland, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>8</sup>W. E. Hawley and Jackson Gallup, "The 'List' *versus* the 'Sentence' Method of Teaching spelling," *Journal of Educational Research*, V (1922), 306-310.

Paul McKee, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup>Ernest Horn, *A Basic Writing Vocabulary*. University of Iowa Monographs in Education, No. 4. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1926.

<sup>4</sup>Henry D. Rinsland, *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1945.

<sup>5</sup>W. A. Saucier, *Theory and Practice in the Elementary School*, pp. 248-49. New York: Macmillan Company, 1941.

<sup>6</sup>Paul McKee, *Teaching and Testing Spelling by Column and Context Form*. Doctor's Thesis. University of Iowa, 1924.

W. H. Winch, "Additional Researches on Learning to Spell," *Journal of Educational Psychology* VI (1916), 93-110.

research available which pertains to word selection is based upon the *writing* of children and adults. The variations in size between the understanding vocabulary, speaking vocabulary, writing vocabulary, and the potential or marginal vocabulary have been noted.<sup>9</sup> However, whether you speak of child or adult needs in spelling, those needs are centered in the *writing* vocabulary. Part of the confusion has come from educators who have noticed the relatively high correlations between reading and spelling and have tried to make some use of the phenomenon to improve children's spelling ability. Some of the complications involved in this matter are described by Strickland.<sup>10</sup>

The use of the term, "natural setting," has also assumed an emotional tinge. In spite of the fact that the natural setting of a word which requires spelling must be in the child's writing, we still see a major portion of spelling time often given over to reading and conversation. Apparently,

<sup>9</sup>Ruth Strickland, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

from the nature of the term, "natural setting," conclusions are drawn to the effect that since words are not ordinarily written in list form, they should not be studied in list form. Not many of us would argue that our spelling needs, other than perhaps in a few schools, arise from word lists. The crucial item stems from the question, "When the spelling needs are identified, *what is the most efficient method of study?*" Once again going to the research, our best available *evidence*, not opinion, favors the list method.<sup>11</sup> It is not enough to object on the basis of opinion. Until additional evidence is available, we must go along with the list presentation of words, for better or for worse.

Why then should THE SPELLING LIST be such a specter to educators? All we need to do is to follow our research findings and if still in doubt, test our hypotheses with further research. Until such research is done, why not accept the facts or trends and try to teach accordingly?

<sup>11</sup>Paul McKee, *loc. cit.*

# *Teachers Work Together in Improving the Language Arts*

WALTER B. HEISCHMAN<sup>1</sup>

Democratic administration functions successfully in today's forward-looking schools. When a school operates democratically, improvement of instruction and a genuine interest in the welfare of the teachers are primary concerns of the administration. Neither the principal nor the superintendent worries about receiving credit for worthwhile contributions to the program. They are willing to delegate responsibility and authority to the staff and to accept the results of the work of the group.

Teachers too have an obligation if they desire a voice in making school policies and in curriculum work. They must be qualified through training and experience to do superior work. They should be willing to spend some time over and beyond their regular school day. Working harmoniously together in a spirit of give and take is necessary. Contributions to the growth and development of children should stand uppermost in their minds.

A staff able to work together as a group in arriving at a solution to common problems does not just happen—it is built and developed over a period of years. In this article the writer will describe how a group of outstanding teachers worked cooperatively in an attempt to improve a language arts program.

Like many other schools of the mid-century, we have experienced growing pains. During a period of four years our

elementary enrollment has more than doubled. Eight and nine sections now are necessary in some grades, where formerly only two were found. Naturally this increase in enrollment required additional instructors. If some uniformity in instruction was to be maintained, the staff and the principal agreed that an outline of the language arts program would be helpful. The general idea was to standardize to a degree but not to the extent of taking away the initiative and creativeness of the teachers.

Before school was dismissed in the spring the teachers were given an opportunity to volunteer for service on the language arts committee. The final selection of committee members was made by the principal and in cases where more than one teacher in a grade offered her service the person who had had no experience on curriculum committees during the previous two years was given preference. The final committee consisted of six teachers. The selection of the chairman was made during the summer, thus giving her an opportunity to do some thinking in this area and to bring some ideas to school in the fall.

## *The Year's Work*

A general staff meeting was held during the first month of school. A professor from a neighboring university, who is con-

<sup>1</sup>Superintendent of Schools, Upper Arlington Schools, Columbus, Ohio.



sidered outstanding because of his success as a teacher and his recognized contributions to the fields of children's literature and language arts, was chosen as the speaker. He was able to pin-point some of the important aspects of the program and at the same time serve as an inspiration to the entire staff. This meeting served as a successful "kickoff" for the year's work.

#### *Steps in Organization*

*Informal Exploratory Meetings.* Committee members began their work by holding informal luncheon sessions to discuss language arts in relation to the total school program, the broad objectives, and how the language arts might contribute to these and the general objectives in relation to the program. Consideration was given to the findings of recent research, our philosophy and attitudes toward children and the situation in which we work.

*Limiting the Areas of Study.* Committee members decided to limit the year's study to the following areas: (1) oral expression, (2) written expression, including creative writing, informational writing, handwriting, spelling, tools of expression, and (3) listening. It was decided to leave reading, a large and important phase of the language arts program, for another year's study.

*Exchange of Thinking With High School and Junior High Staff.* In the early planning stages talks were held with the junior high and the senior high school staff members who were concerned primarily with the language arts. Included in this group were English teachers, foreign language teachers, and a teacher of commercial subjects. Ideas were exchanged and committee members asked staff mem-

bers for specific suggestions as to what contributions our elementary language arts program should make and how these contributions might be made more effective. In regard to the topic of formal grammar, the committee learned that the high school staff members were in complete accord with the thinking of the committee, namely that an abstract study of formal grammar in the elementary level has little meaning or carry over to actual use. The committee members requested that high school members share some samples of written expression showing the form which they require for business letters and friendly letters. These samples were later included in our illustrative materials so that the same form might be taught to pupils throughout their school career.

*Professional Literature and Other Courses of Study.* Considerable time was spent in reading professional books and magazines. Courses of studies of other schools were carefully examined and the elementary standards of the state of Ohio were studied.

*Planning the General Outline for Organizing Material.* This was a group process arrived at after much discussion and evaluation of other courses of study which we had used. These were evaluated in terms of the usefulness of their organization and content. Thus it was possible to arrive at the criteria for the organization of the outline. It was decided that the outline should be brief, concise, and that it would contain practical illustrations.

*Division of Committee into Subcommittees for Specialized Work and Study.* The total committee was now divided into three subcommittees with two members

serving on each subcommittee. In each case the subcommittees were composed of a primary teacher and an intermediate grade teacher. Committee members now engaged in a more professionalized study of literature. Ideas were exchanged freely in the subcommittees and in meetings of the entire committee. Frequent consultations were held with other teachers on all grade levels.

*Collecting Samples of Children's Work.* Early in the year the committee members began to collect interesting examples of language arts experiences at all grade levels. This project was continued throughout the year. These samples furnished the concrete illustrative material included in the outline.

*Making the First Draft.* In the spring the committee members began to organize and assemble their materials into a first draft. Each committee member held meetings with all the teachers of her grade level when questions arose or when their opinions were needed. The total staff contributed to the outline in this manner.

*Revising First Draft, Presentation to the Faculty and Making Final Draft.* After the first draft was made the committee spent much time going over it and making revisions. The individual committee members went back to the teachers and their respective classes for criticisms and suggestions. The Committee then met with the elementary principal to obtain his reaction. Revisions were then made on the basis of the suggestions received and the final draft was made for presentation to the faculty. This was done in a general staff meeting where every teacher, after she had had an opportunity of examining

the tentative outline, could bring her suggestions to the group. It was found that the outline was generally accepted by all the teachers. The fact that they had had a part in the preparation, plus the feeling that the committee members were their representatives, contributed to the general acceptance. The final draft was then made.

In each of the areas covered the following general outline was followed: introduction, major activities, experiences to motivate interest, suggested grade sequences, outcomes, grade expectancies, and either illustrations or standards. The following are illustrations taken from various parts of the completed outline:

*Experiences to motivate interest in writing plays, a major activity in the area of creative writing:* Reading stories or books; dramatizing actual experiences; relating historical events; dramatizing foreign customs; dramatizing home, family or school incidents; acting out current events; organizing pageants and portraying legendary characters.

*Grade sequence of spelling in grade 3:* Use basic list in spelling text supplemented by needs in other areas; learn approximately 15 words per week; use words in sentences and brief stories before spelling test; develop rules through examples; teach, test, reteach when necessary, and test; use words functionally during study period; make use of long and short vowel sounds and all consonant sounds; refer to rhyming words or "family words"; use no workbooks; recommend home study only in special cases and upon request.

*Outcomes of listening:* To learn to lis-

ten critically; to learn to weigh and evaluate the ideas that are heard; to listen with more discrimination and with more critical evaluation; to develop the attitude that good listening is a matter of courtesy; and to set up standards of good listening through group discussions.

*Grade expectancies in oral expression, grade 4:* By the end of the year the child is able to distinguish the relevant and irrelevant in discussion; respects the opinions of others in a discussion; creates dramatizations and reproduces episodes in dramatic form; is able to give concise reports; can use a carefully chosen vocabulary; speaks with a clear enunciation; is growing in his ability to interpret what he hears; has eliminated outstanding errors in verb forms; and observes the common courtesies in social situations.

The outline as completed is not considered final nor will it be at any time. As each teacher follows it during the current year she is doing her own evaluation. At the end of the year a committee will be chosen to evaluate the outline and make suggestions for revisions and additions. By continuing this each year we hope to make the language arts program something that is meaningful and worth-while to both teachers and children.

In-service work which teachers obtain by serving on a curriculum committee promotes professional growth. The fact that the entire staff contributed to our study assures the use of the general outline in daily class work. The chief contribution made by the administration was giving the teachers an opportunity to do what they were capable of doing.

## *Have We Over-emphasized the Readiness Factor?*

GLENN MCCracken<sup>1</sup>

Too many children are passing through our present-day schools without learning to read adequately. No one denies that. In one city the Director of Curriculum reported recently that, "On the basis of standardized tests given to all students from grade one through grade 12, we will have to say that 72% of our pupils are inadequate readers." In a Western Pennsylvania college last year, 20% of the Freshman Class were required to take remedial reading courses, *without credit*, so that in the judgment of school authorities they

would be able to read well enough to complete successfully their college program. Think of that! In a college class where most of the students came from the upper 50% of their high school classes, 20% needed remedial reading. An indictment of our reading programs? Rather conclusive evidence isn't it?

Why? As twentieth century progress moves ahead at such a startling rate in so many other fields, why are we faced with

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the fact that our schools are clogged with poor readers? Why does reading inadequacy continue to be one of the principal causes of school drop-outs? Here in New Castle, Pennsylvania, where a carefully conducted reading experimental program has been in progress for the past three years, there is an abundance of evidence to justify this very unpopular conclusion; namely, *That, generally speaking, because we have failed to provide reading programs with which we can teach nearly every child to read, we have tried to justify our predicament by over-emphasizing the readiness needs of the pupils.* Expressed in more homely words, *The trend in readiness places the blame on the children.* Since we could not, by traditional methods, teach more of our children to complete successfully a first year program in one year, we were too willing to say that these children were not ready to learn to read.

The work upon which this article is based has come to be known as The New Castle Reading Experiment. The results to date have been rather widely distributed and discussed. This work was started in 1947 when plans were formulated to prepare filmstrips to accompany the lessons contained in a particular basic reading program\*

Working on the assumption that the material in the basic reading program under consideration was adequate if it could be taught to the children, filmstrip (textfilm) frames were prepared which correlated with the various lessons in the basic program for grade one so that every lesson

throughout the school year could be visualized for the learners. These frames were designed, not particularly to extend the concepts of the children in the world around them as is the main purpose of so much supplementary reading material, but to provide a more effective method for teaching the exact material as it appeared day by day in the textbook manual. The lessons on the filmstrip frames were, therefore, the same as corresponding ones in the textbooks, *but organized in such a manner that the best use might be made of the advantages that accompany projected material.* A textfilm manual was prepared which suggested to the teacher how she might use each frame with the lesson it accompanied.

In September, 1949, three of our teachers at the Thaddeus Stevens School began to use this program in their beginning classes. Each day's lesson was started at the screen. The large, brightly colored images, presented in a room with the lights dimmed, increased the interest of *all* the pupils to the extent that their attention spans were greatly lengthened. They provided a means for promoting vigorous pupil discussion. The more reticent and backward children made many trips to the screen "to explain," and to "point out," thus greatly improving their social confidence. These large, life-like images kept all of the children participating in every step of the lesson. New meanings were vividly clarified for each child and the learning was *fixed* in his mind because it was visualized for him. When the transfer was made from the screen to the books, the pupils could read successfully and enjoy the experience because they had worked out the problems of the lesson to-

\* (The Laidlaw Basic Primary Reading Program with Textfilms), The Editor invites replies to the views expressed in this article.



gether, from material which appealed to them.

Before the end of the school year the teachers realized that they had the best groups of readers in their experience. When the objective data were studied results seemed even more startling. These data reveal some unusual results. The three classes were of average mental ability, their median I.Q. scores being 102, 104, and 101 respectively. Reading Readiness medians for the three groups were 1.9, 1.9, and 1.9; also average. But reading achievement scores for the three groups are unusual in two respects. 1) the median scores for the Gates Primary Reading Tests were high: 2.72, 2.70, and 2.45. Some of the children scored very high; 2) the most significant point about these results is the fact that *there were no low scores*. The poorest achievement scores in each of the three groups were 2.18, 2.13, and 1.99. Every pupil, regardless of his mental ability or apparent readiness for reading, scored into the second grade level in reading achievement after eight and one-half months in grade one. (Note: The complete statistical data discussed above is too extensive to include with this article. Persons interested in studying it may write the author for copies).

It is the absence of low achievement scores that is particularly unusual about these tables. The 5 to 15 percent of the children whom we normally expect to make up the unsatisfactory group in an average class—those from whom we expected reading scores ranging from 1.3 or 4 to 1.8, instead scored from 2.1 to 2.6. As far back as records are available at this

school, at least six pupils were retained in grade one each year until this program was introduced. No pupil, in seven previous years, scoring as low as 1.6 in readiness, had been promoted his first year in school. Contrast this situation with what happened during the first year of this experimental program when, not only were there no retentions, but pupils with I.Q.'s as low as 81 and with readiness scores as low as 1.5 seemed entirely ready for the grade two program after one year in the beginning class.

While data for the 1950-51 first grade classes at this school are not presented here, the results for that year were even better although the classes were considerably larger. In the two sections of beginners, the median reading scores were 2.88 and 2.88, with the lowest score in each class being 2.11 and 2.00.

What does the information herewith presented mean to the school involved? It means that for two years now, in five sections of first grade pupils, no child has been an inadequate reader; no first grade teacher has had to worry about problem readers; no unhappy parent has come to the building to find out wherein the school failed with his child.

What revolutionary innovations were introduced into the program at the Thaddeus Stevens School in New Castle that could produce such startling improvement in the teaching of beginning reading? None at all. The preparation of an effective visual approach to the subject was *merely carrying out a group of recommendations* that many progressive educators have known for years would produce much better results; namely, 1) that

pupils' mastery of subject matter is greatly improved when the teaching is visualized more and verbalized less, 2) that learning improves as interest increases, 3) that methods which promote vigorous discussion also improve learning, 4) that when provision is made for all of the pupils to participate in the entire lesson, a greater degree of learning will result for more pupils, 5) that when the problems at hand are vividly clarified, there is greater chance that the learning will become fixed in the mind of the learner, 6) that, *particularly with slower learning children*, more learning occurs when the teaching is in greater detail, and 7) that people learn faster from materials which have particular appeal to them. The program used in this experimental work provides a new and better method of utilizing the above values. It is not surprising then that with its use such unusual improvement should follow.

In light of the millions of words that have been spoken and written in the past five years extolling the values of the auditory and the visual approach to teaching why have we not hurried to incorporate this approach into our reading programs? In visiting schools in all section of the country recently, I have found everybody in agreement with regard to the value of this meaningful type of teaching but *I have not found it in use*. It is true that some effort is made to use visual and auditory materials in an incidental way and in an occasional manner. Such use is not, in any sense of the word, taking advantage of the many values we know accompany planned and regular employment of correlated aids. In the classes with which the accompanying results were achieved, each lesson in

the beginning program was visualized and the films were used every day.

Are we on the wrong track when we place so much emphasis on readiness for reading in considering the progress of our pupils? I certainly think so. I am well aware that pupils need to be prepared for the reading experience but I am equally convinced that we are greatly over-emphasizing the need for extended pre-reading activities and that the practice in its present form will not survive. In the most positive of the present thinking with regard to readiness for reading, it is suggested that in many of our classes some of the pupils will need a program of pre-reading activities for two or three months before they are ready to begin actual reading. It is also suggested that other children will need an even longer period of the pre-period of the pre-reading type of readiness, perhaps extending to the middle of the school year. In visits to a great many school systems during the past three years I found this philosophy to be generally accepted, and in all of these schools I also found much concern because there was so little improvement in the teaching of reading.

The above point of view is a negative approach to the problem. We were not able to teach nearly all of the children to read adequately *with the programs in use* so we dwelled more and more on the readiness factor. Children who did not learn to read were evaluated as not being ready to read anyway and the actual reading experience was postponed farther and farther into the school year. In other words we were blaming it on the children. When we say that children are not ready to read

we have license to say only that they may not be ready to read in reading programs as we know them. We cannot honestly go any farther than that. Perhaps it is the program that is at fault rather than the children. All of the evidence thus far collected in the New Castle Reading Experiment certainly points in that direction. One of the methods of ascertaining the degree of readiness for reading in beginning pupils is the reading readiness test. What we fail to take into consideration is the fact that all present reading readiness tests were standardized in schools where the traditional method of teaching is used. These tests simply predict the success a pupil is likely to experience under the predominating type of teaching. That is the only basis they have on which to make evaluations. They could not accurately predict the success a pupil might have if a better program were used. In the tables herein discussed the pupils scored much higher in the reading tests than they did in readiness. Some pupils scored as much as a full grade higher than was predicted. Why? After these tests had been highly accurate in predictability for six previous years why is the correlation so poor all at once? Since no change was made in the first grade faculty, it must be concluded that the visual approach provided the difference.

In light of the evidence gathered in New Castle then, we are not improving the situation by producing classes that score normally as predicted in readiness tests. We need to improve our program of teaching so the pupils will score much better than was predicted for them and it will follow that readiness tests will be re-

vised to fit the improvement.

We must also revise our thinking with regard to the readiness of children for reading. The present trend has led us into a dilemma. It is one thing to say that pupils who spend so much extra time in pre-reading activities catch up with the others later on but it is quite another situation when we find evidence all over the country that they do not. Neither are we getting anywhere when we keep extending the pre-reading activities farther and farther into the school year on the assumption that the pupils finally will be ready to read in a program that may not be adequate in itself. The end result in both cases is evidenced in the situation as it is today—pupils in all grades who cannot read the subject matter of the grade level.

What would have happened to some of the children whose data we have been discussing if such a program had been followed with them? It is noted, for example, that one of the children began the year's work with an I.Q. of 81 and a readiness grade equivalent score of 1.5. She also had other earmarks of a slow learner who would not learn to read in one year. With our former program we would have worked for weeks with her in pre-reading activities, then plodded along with her while she learned a few words toward the end of the year, and she likely would have scored about 1.5 in reading achievement. The next year she would have made a little more progress in the grade one level but she would be classified as a most inadequate reader and as a retarded pupil. Actually this child is presently (her third year in school) reading suc-

cessfully in a grade three class. The difference lies in the fact that her lessons in both grades one and two were visualized for her, a particularly effective medium when working with slow learners.

We talk too much about permitting pupils to progress at their own rate. Their own rate with what? With a reading program that may not fit their needs nor their interests. We should stop trying to fit the pupil to the program and begin working toward a program that will fit the pupil. The evidence presented here indicates that pupils are more ready to read than we give them credit for. Many people are of the opinion that basic reading programs are being made less and less difficult so that teachers and pupils can have more success with them. If that is true it is an unfortunate situation. Less ambitious programs may be expected to produce less adequate readers. Why not use our efforts to produce a program that will be more effective? that will appeal more to young children? Perhaps the present method of teaching primary reading is "too academic," "too bookish." It may be that we have been using material that appeals to adults without knowing whether or not it is the type of material that will have the most appeal to children.

The psychology of human nature also points the finger of suspicion at the present trend in readiness. Six year old children come to school expecting to learn to read. They have been telling their uncles and aunts all summer that they are going

to school to learn to read. Their parents expect us to teach them to read. The New Castle Reading Experiment continues to provide ample evidence that if we are willing to revise some of our methods that have not worked and build a program *that appeals to the child*, it can be done.

It is not the intention of this article to discredit any of the many fine features of the readiness factor. Certainly it was a great step forward when we began to realize that adequate plans for preparing the child for the reading experience must be made an important part of the primary reading program. And we are not suggesting that the above-mentioned statistical data alone proves that readiness for reading is being over-emphasized. But we do want to point out that in the five classes of beginners with whom this visualized program has been used no pupil has achieved lower than the grade two level as measured by standardized tests, and that evidence of this unusual reading ability is further borne out by the judgment of the teachers. If children, and particularly those of lower ability, can reach these levels in reading achievement in one year and, in addition, enjoy improved experiences in social living, the feeling of success that accompanies learning to read, and the wide growth in concepts that seems to be prevalent when visual aids are widely used, it seems to us to present a pretty strong case for the ideas offered in the above paragraphs.

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# *The Vocabulary Difficulty of Content Subjects in Grade Five*

MARY E. JOHNSON<sup>1</sup>

Reading difficulties experienced by intermediate grade pupils seem to point to the need for determining the extent to which pupils understand the meaning vocabulary in the content subjects.

In the primary grades modern basic readers and supplementary books tend to have controlled vocabulary of not more than a few hundred words, but in the upper grades as the pupils begin to work with the extensive materials of the content subjects such as health, science, geography, literature, and history the vocabulary is unlimited. Therefore, certain demands are made for reading skills which pupils seem not equipped to meet.

Slower learners are especially handicapped by the inability to master the rapidly expanding vocabulary of the content subjects. In the intermediate grades, pupils seem to have considerable difficulty comprehending reading materials in the social studies and science.

Pupils in the intermediate grades tend to make lower scores in problem solving than in arithmetic computation, and there seem to be a high percentage of failure at the beginning of the intermediate grade level. In many schools the slow progress of the pupils in grade four is notably high.

These factors tend to emphasize the importance of word meaning skill which appears to be basic to comprehension of history, geography, science, arithmetic, health, and literature in grade five.

The absence of any valid instrument which would help teachers determine word meaning status in the content subjects and personal interest in the importance of word meaning as a skill prompted the writer to undertake a study concerned with the understanding of vocabu-

lary of content subjects by children of grade five.<sup>2</sup>

Examination of the research in the field of reading revealed that failure to comprehend basic words is frequently found among middle-grade pupils and many of them are unprepared by their experiences to understand the new words encountered in the content subjects. However, more definite information seemed necessary. The writer decided to devise a word meaning test based on the content subjects: arithmetic, geography, history, science, health, and literature.

## *Construction of the Tests*

### *Selection of words:*

The words for the test were selected from fifth grade textbooks that the pupils used daily. Three sources were used in the selection of the words. Some were taken from the glossary, some from the index, and some from pronouncing word lists of each textbook. Words in italics of each text were selected. A random sampling of 150 words was made by selecting every tenth word from 1500 chosen. These 150 words were checked against the Thorndike List of 30,000 words and Luella Cole's Technical Vocabulary List.

The following chart, showing the percentage of words used in the test checked against "Thorndike's List of 30,000 words," and "Luella Cole's Technical Vocabulary List" may serve to indicate difficulty of words chosen for the test.

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Johnson is a critic teacher in the George P. Phenix School, Hampton, Va.

<sup>2</sup>Mary E. Johnson, *A Study of the Understanding of Vocabulary of Content Subjects by Children of Grade Five*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Boston: Boston University, 1950.

TABLE I  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF  
WORDS IN EACH SUBJECT AREA  
FOUND IN THORNDIKE LIST OF 30,000  
WORDS AND IN COLE'S TECHNICAL  
VOCABULARY

Words	Thorndike		Luella Cole	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Arithmetic	22	88	22	88
History	25	100	12	48
Health	24	96	14	56
Geography	25	100	18	72
Science	25	100	14	56
Literature	24	96	1	4

*Selecting the meanings:*

Research has shown that an unabridged dictionary gives a considerable sampling of terms for nearly every special field of human knowledge. In this study the following dictionaries were used:

The Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary  
The Winston Simplified Dictionary  
Webster's Elementary Dictionary  
Funk and Wagnall's Unabridged Dictionary  
The Executive's Desk Book

Some of the words listed in the above dictionaries had several meanings, while others ranged from one to five different meanings. A chart showing the variety of meanings used in this test will indicate the number of meanings used for each of the 150 words.

TABLE II  
VARIETY OF MEANINGS USED  
IN TEST OF 150 WORDS

Number of Meanings	Number Words
5	56
4	39
3	26
2	13
1	16

*Arrangement of test items:*

In order to determine the word meaning status of fifth grade pupils, it was necessary to use the multiple-choice type test, since the pupils had to check all of the meanings they knew for each word. It was not expected that all of the meanings would be known, but the children were encouraged to do all possible. The 150 words were divided into six tests.

They were arranged as group tests and were given in three sittings.

*Presentation and Analysis of the Test*

The pupils included in the study were all residents of Elizabeth City County, and the towns of Hampton and Phoebus in Virginia. This group was unique because of its heterogeneity. A small number came from superior homes; the parents were army officers, professional men, business men, and clerical workers. Some came from average homes; the parents were skilled laborers and semi-skilled workers. The majority of the pupils came from homes of low socio-economic level; the parents were unskilled manual workers.

A preliminary try-out was given to sixty-four fifth grade pupils to determine the difficulty of test items, length of time required to administer and clarity of directions. Following the preliminary try-out, needed changes were made.

The test was then administered to 684 fifth grade pupils. The teachers in the schools administered the test. The supervisors and the superintendent aided in the distribution of the tests.

It was first considered desirable to get the distribution of the scores obtained by the group. The highest possible score that could be acquired on the six tests was 556. The mean score of the total group was 248.15. No child had a perfect score. The scores ranged from a high of 458 to a low of 32, and the S. D. was 91.67.

The data were analyzed to determine:

1. The number of correct responses on each item.
2. The relative order of difficulty of geography words.
3. The relative order of difficulty of history words.
4. The relative order of difficulty of literature words.
5. The relative order of difficulty of science words.
6. The relative order of difficulty of health words.

7. The relative order of difficulty of arithmetic words.

8. The relative order of difficulty of the six subject matter areas.

Of the 150 words one or more meanings were known for the following words: Belt, plant, plantation, trunk, decay, soft, balance, remainder, check, lane, march, and plate. The remaining 138 words were unfamiliar to some of the pupils, as they failed to recognize any of the meanings.

In order to determine word knowledge in each subject matter area, Tables III through VIII were devised to show the relative order of difficulty of each word.

TABLE III  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF GEOGRAPHY WORDS

Word	Per Cent Correct	Word	Per Cent Correct
plant	97.80	bay	33.62
belt	95.17	smelt	33.62
center	94.88	current	13.74
crop	81.28	rapid	12.72
soil	80.70	degree	10.96
coast	77.63	frigid	10.96
import	64.61	source	10.84
plain	64.61	look	10.67
nomad	60.23	palm	10.52
range	51.46	graze	9.21
region	43.56	forage	9.07
thresh	43.56	quarry	8.04
gulf	41.22		

TABLE VI  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF HISTORY WORDS

Words	Per Cent Correct	Words	Per Cent Correct
plantation	98.23	council	24.27
pioneer	97.80	siege	24.27
settle	97.66	annex	18.12
discover	86.25	interior	17.39
surrender	85.08	retreat	14.18
voyage	81.28	unite	11.98
punishment	71.62	common	10.67
territory	70.17	strait	10.23
colony	65.35	stock	9.94
claim	64.61	aide	8.62
navigator	58.04	decade	6.29
mission	42.98	estate	6.12
locomotive	25.14		

TABLE V  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF LITERATURE WORDS

Words	Per Cent Correct	Words	Per Cent Correct
lane	97.66	rein	25.00
march	95.17	decision	24.61
court	94.15	bazaar	22.22
gallant	82.16	descend	21.19
flight	80.70	plate	20.02
legend	71.62	kernel	19.29
nod	65.76	reign	9.94
goblet	62.85	incense	8.47
vault	54.67	valiant	6.14
forge	49.57	ravenous	5.69
offer	43.56	flagon	3.36
gratitude	42.39	caldron	2.74
cushion	34.94		

TABLE VI  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF SCIENCE WORDS

Words	Per Cent Correct	Words	Per Cent Correct
cloud	98.09	rotate	25.00
cure	97.51	migrate	24.72
experiment	87.86	cell	23.39
ventilate	85.08	screen	14.18
crown	70.17	mold	13.30
drug	65.65	gauge	12.28
trunk	65.35	foul	10.84
vegetation	51.46	substance	9.34
sundial	49.97	hibernate	8.33
artificial	44.73	tarnish	8.04
eliminate	39.32	club	6.86
screw	25.00	general	5.55
particle	25.00		

TABLE VII  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF HEALTH WORDS

Words	Per Cent Correct	Words	Per Cent Correct
spoil	98.10	delicate	50.00
soft	97.51	absorb	48.52
decay	96.92	symptom	45.61
examine	95.90	process	43.56
diet	95.90	structure	30.99
pupil	94.88	tract	25.29
sense	93.42	contract	25.00
joint	85.08	interval	21.19
sore	80.70	arch	9.34
digest	70.02	adjust	8.08
scalp	65.65	internal	6.87
pulse	65.51	value	4.96
organ	51.47		

TABLE VIII  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF ARITHMETIC WORDS

Words	Per Cent Correct	Words	Per Cent Correct
check	99.26	term	62.57
remainder	98.68	compare	61.25
cash	98.39	distance	58.33
balance	97.66	reduce	57.60
deposit	95.61	acre	55.84
difference	95.46	numerator	49.57
scale	95.46	quotient	49.57
account	95.32	denominator	45.61
sum	95.02	graph	36.11
measure	80.40	charge	25.29
weight	70.02	area	23.97
equal	62.86	cord	19.15
product	62.86		

TABLE IX  
RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY  
OF SUBJECT MATTER AREAS

Subject Matter Area	Per Cent Correct
Arithmetic	67.64
Health	56.41
History	44.33
Geography	43.21
Literature	41.76
Science	38.64

### *Summary and Conclusions*

In summarizing this study, it is necessary to review briefly its purpose, which was to determine the meaning 684 fifth grade pupils had for certain words in the content subjects.

The vocabulary used for the study was derived from fifth grade books which the pupils who took part in this experiment used daily.

From these books, 1500 words were found which a fifth grade child might have difficulty in comprehending. The words were classified into six subject matter areas. Out of this list, 150 words were taken at random, to be tested by a multiple-choice test, using from one to five meanings per word.

The results of this study show that a program of word enrichment is needed for the understanding of the textbooks used in the content subjects. Many of the concepts are abstract and the pupils have few previous experiences with which to associate the new ideas. The textbooks are written by subject-matter specialists and contain hundreds of words which pupils seen not equipped to meet.

Many of the pupils may recognize some of the new terms in the content subjects but have little real understanding of them because they don't apply the correct meaning.

Since a meaning vocabulary is important if one is to read with ease and understanding the teacher is faced with the problem of developing a program of word enrichment that is adequate for the understanding of the content subjects.

## *Editorial-Writing in the Sixth Grade*

JESS R. BEARD<sup>1</sup>

AND

CORINNE SCHUMACHER<sup>1</sup>

Are sixth graders able to express their personal opinions in a coherent and organized way?

This is the question we asked ourselves about our group of children. We knew

they had definite opinions dealing with matters that we, as adults, hadn't con-

<sup>1</sup>Laboratory school teacher and student teacher, respectively, in the McMurry Laboratory School, Northern Illinois State Teachers College, DeKalb, Illinois.



dozens of controversial issues and other considered controversial. We knew there was a need for further practice in presenting various points of view and in writing their ideas. Their oral expression and participation were highly developed, but there was a lack of enthusiasm and purposefulness in any written expression. Their compositions lacked color and vivid, descriptive appeal. They were destitute of revealing details and human interest. The children did not seem aware that, in order to interest a reader in their thoughts, they must first sell themselves and their ideas in their writing. They possessed excellent opinions in topics of importance and took great pride in demonstrating their viewpoints through oral class discussions. But, when they were asked to formulate their ideas and place them on paper, they immediately displayed a dislike, and there was a barrage of comments which indicated a lack of self-confidence in their own ability to organize and present written material.

### *The Nature of the Problem*

Our problem, therefore, was two fold: (1) to stimulate some creative, original thinking about their own opinions and problems, and (2) to provide effective experiences in writing their opinions. In addition, we wanted a project that would not only be appealing but would contribute to our larger program of social development. The project should encourage pupil planning, committee participation, and opportunities to exercise choice and judgment values. This article attempts to describe the organization and development of the experiences of these pupils as they worked toward these larger objectives.

Our answer was to foster techniques in writing editorials. Could sixth graders really understand and write editorials? We didn't know, but the idea was intriguing enough to give it a try. Admittedly, we did approach it with fear and trembling; we even thought of a couple of ideas to be brought forth rather hastily in case it did not work. Fortunately, we had a good lead. We had been rather regularly publishing a small mimeographed classroom newspaper which had some editorials, although the last two issues had none. Those writings we had printed as editorials were of this nature: "I don't think the children should throw snowballs by the doors of on the floors." There was no evidence of the school," or "We should try to keep the school clean by not throwing paper persuasiveness, forcefulness in presenting ideas, or critical thinking.

### *Warming Up*

As a "warm up" to editorials, we tried to sharpen our knowledge of descriptive words and synonyms. On our bulletin board were pictures showing a variety of facial expressions, each denoting definite moods. Beneath these illustrations were flaps which covered an exhaustive list of descriptive adjectives pertaining to each facial manifestation. The pupils first attempted to study these pictures, and to volunteer many original adjectives. In order to gain command of the new words which they discovered, we used them in class discussions, and referred to them, whenever the situation arose, during other school activities.

We also read two short selections describing a single incident. The first selection was a bare, colorless statement of the

happening; the second was a glowing account written in simple terms—very descriptive, very colorful, and fairly saturated with excitement. We analyzed the reasons for liking one selection better than the other. For additional activities during this time, we read picturesque and persuasive advertisements of commercial products, and we used some of our newly acquired adjectives to describe various individuals or objects in the room.

The children worked crossword puzzles in order to get additional practice in using synonyms. They especially enjoyed handling and learning to use copies of the sauruses and books of synonyms. They were impressed by the size of these books to help writers make better choices of words. Then we felt ready actually to begin the editorial work. We gave each child a sheet of paper with the following mimeographed directions and statements:

Underline your opinion and give some good and meaningful reasons to support your viewpoints. Write them in paragraph form.

1. In my opinion, physical education (is a very important) (is not a very important) part of the school program because...
2. The workmen in the halls are disturbing the classroom activities. I think a good solution to this problem would be...
3. Social dance lessons (should be) (should not be) included as one of our physical education classes because...

The children's opinions were varied, but positively and frankly stated. A large share of the class solved the second problem (one that was quite near and dear to all our hearts since we have been going through a building rejuvenating process all during the year) with the pointed opin-

ion, "fire them," or "Quit school until the work is finished." An insight into social behavior was evidenced in answer to the third question, "People need enjoyment and you also get acquainted with girls."

We found that opinions were obviously present though little attention had been given to reasons in support of these opinions. This was, of course, additional proof of our basic assumption that the children *had* opinions even if they did not realize that there were reasons for supporting them. We wanted to show them how to analyze their opinions.

The next day we brought in professional editorials that we felt would be of general interest to the class. We read these and discussed the opinion the writer held, the reasons he gave to support his opinion, the title he gave his editorial, and his way of expressing himself.

Of course, after this discussion, we had our criteria for an editorial. The only thing we had to do was to get the children to state the criteria in an organized way. They soon formulated the following list:

Timely subject  
Real opinion  
Reasons for the opinion  
Good beginning and ending sentences  
Catchy title  
Important to all  
Grammatically correct  
Interestingly written  
Central idea

Between times we thought it would be advantageous and very, very progressive to have an "outside speaker." As luck would have it, we were able to snare into our web of intrigue a college senior, the editor-in-chief of the college newspaper. So, over a friendly cup of coffee we were

able to persuade her to come and give the children the "low-down" on writing editorials. We briefed her on our progress to date, and laid bare our teacher objectives. The next morning we were able to report happily to an unsuspecting class that we had "happened" to talk with the student editor of the college newspaper about what we were doing in the sixth grade, and she was so interested she wanted to come to see and help us if the children would like to have her. The next problem was, "What do we ask her when SHE comes?"

Our list was not long, but it was vital for better understanding. The questions the class formulated were:

- How do we say "I think"?
- What is a good title?
- What are the types of editorials?
- What should we write about?
- Where do we get our ideas?
- Where do we find editorials in the paper?
- Who writes editorials?
- What steps do we take when writing editorials?
- Does the use of descriptive words help in editorial writing?
- What may we do with our editorials after we write them?

#### *Our Speaker Arrives*

SHE came, answered our questions, and led a lively discussion. It was indeed a most satisfying period, both to the children and to us. Somehow it seemed to the children that SHE was a knight in shining armor, with a halo, who had come just in the nick of time. Without a doubt, she did do a wonderful job of answering their questions in a way that they could understand. (Moral: A *really good* resource person can painlessly teach in twenty minutes, what a teacher would struggle through in three times that long.)

To stimulate daily interest in editorials, and to sustain a continual awareness of certain important objectives, a news bulletin board was constructed. Outstanding editorials which had been clipped and brought to the classroom by both pupils and teachers were read, classified according to categories, and posted. Samples of 'catchy' titles and their power of appeal were also exhibited there.

The importance of expression and broad scope which typifies the editorial was added to by means of daily posted quotations. "By injecting editorial opinion, the press can sway the minds and opinions of millions of people who read the paper each day." The moral obligations necessary in writing an editorial were called to their attention by the following type of reminder. "In order to be sure of what we see and hear, we must examine and investigate carefully. This idea should be kept in mind when writing editorials. We must be sure to look into the situation thoroughly before making *snap judgments*."

After we had progressed further, the group decided it would prove beneficial to organize our ideas and plans. We would do this in order to develop any further activities connected with our study of the editorial.

We organized three groups after deciding that, by use of this decentralized method, more worthwhile and concentrated plans could be made. The plans made and the ideas devised within these groups were presented for whole class approval or rejection, following adequate discussion.

Pupil committee assignments were

made through the voluntary choice method. They chose those committees to which they could contribute most.

The first group of four girls composed the thank-you letter to the editor of the college newspaper. This courtesy was suggested by one of the children and accepted by the group as a good means of expressing our appreciation for her time, effort, and assistance.

When the letters were presented to the class for approval, we had a real opportunity to point out reasons for making a letter of this type effective. This, then, was an excellent time to inject apropos remarks on mechanics and proper form which the thank-you letter usually follows. And of course, in that it was an actuality or live application, there was obviously a higher degree of interest and learning.

The second group was made up of approximately seven children, the "Planning Committee." It was their job to plan, or perhaps merely suggest, what we were to do with the editorials being written. They made a number of interesting as well as promising contributions. The idea of a contest had been mentioned previously, and so their discussion pointed towards that goal a great deal of the time. They arrived at the following propositions which they presented to the entire class the next day.

1. To publish some of the editorials.
2. To post the editorials on the bulletin board.
3. To read outstanding editorials over the local radio station.
4. To sponsor a contest open to the children in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

One suggestion upon which the plan-

ning committee debated rather heatedly was regarding submitting outstanding editorials to the college and local newspaper. The suggestion was finally rejected by the committee when one of the members flatly stated, "They'd have to be awfully darn good to be published in the paper!"

The contest ideas also evoked quite a debate in the committee as two rather "politically powerful" members were concretely opposed to the idea. Another member marshalled her forces and opposed the contest because, "The eighth graders would be bound to win." The committee was practically in a deadlock until John, who can always ease himself out of any situation, suggested that two winners be chosen from each grade.

When the committee meeting disassembled, there was still not complete agreement on the contest. Noting the opposition in the committee meeting, we wondered what would occur the next day when the secretary reported to the class. However, the report was submitted and immediately there was a barrage of questions and suggestions concerning the details of the contest. The idea was enthusiastically accepted, and our little "rebels" said not a word. Ironically enough, later one of these "rebels" was a winner in the contest!

In order to conduct a successful contest, we realized the necessity of extensive planning. The large problems with which we were confronted as stated by the pupils were the following:

1. What subjects shall we choose to write about?
2. How can we tell the other grades about our contest?



3. How could we make other pupils *want* to write editorials?
4. How will we find which are the best editorials?

These questions were mulled over and committees to solve them were evolved.

1. Subjects
2. Invitation
3. Publicity
4. Judging

Our class period was divided from that time on between concentration on writing our own editorials, and preparation within our groups for the contest.

The "Subject Committee" and the class decided on the following list:

1. Need for Recreation Centers or Play Grounds
2. Service in DeKalb Stores
3. Good Sportsmanship
4. The Korean War
5. George Washington (timely topic)
6. Responsibilities Connected with Care of Pets
7. Hazards at High Accident Rate Corners

They desired a definite understanding that if these topics were not of interest or not suitable, they would be free to choose one of their own preference. Their decision to make selection of topics elastic was an encouraging sign which indicated a broader sense of scope in the value of independent individual selection.

The "Invitation Committee" reasoned that personal or face to face contact would be more effective than the written letter or note of invitation. After gathering information from the other committees, they divided themselves into three groups, each of which would visit one of the grades and inform them accordingly. The prospect of speaking before a comparatively strange group caused a great deal of excitement and apprehension.

They drew up an outline which would cover all the important aspects. The following is a list of those points included in their oral invitation.

1. Invite them to enter.
2. Who sponsors it?
3. What grades are included?
4. How many winners will be chosen?
5. How will they be chosen?
6. By what standards will they be chosen?
7. What topics to be written about?
8. What will be done with winning editorials?
9. When is the deadline for entries?
10. Questions?

Their invitation speeches were rehearsed among themselves and then presented during the language arts period of the other three grades. They did an admirable job! It was quite an accomplishment to be presenting ideas which they felt were excellent enough to air to "those big eighth graders"! This feeling gave them self confidence in what they had to present. The girls who invited the eighth grade were two rather mature sixth graders. Their eagerness to impress these older children led to a very poised demonstration on their part. This was an experience in which both were ready and willing to participate, and therefore they gained much.

The "Publicity Committee" wanted to do "big things" to attract other grade interest. They wished to draw attention to their contest through startling advertising. This committee turned to posters as their most effective way to cause, as one boy called it, "sensational interest."

First, sketches were made on scratch paper and then accurately set up on larger poster board material. Upon each was attached the information which already was

given orally by the invitation committee. One poster was placed in each of the four classrooms in an ideal location, easily available for examination.

The art supervisor was consulted for techniques of poster arrangement and ways to arrive at a most effective and artistic result.

Slips of paper containing a reminder of the contest's culmination were distributed to each student's desk during lunch hour on the day previous to the deadline.

The large and climaxing influence was conducted by the "Judging Committee." In order to choose editorials which were of the highest quality which we felt should be published, read, and posted, certain steps had to be taken. How would we do this in an organized, efficient manner when we would possibly have as many as one hundred editorials to consider?

#### *Meeting in Groups*

The decision was made that we meet in four groups, each of which would be primarily concerned with the editorials of a particular grade. These papers, which were very carefully examined by the groups, were read to the class and titles listed on the board.

Since they were sponsoring this contest and felt they were capable of judging through their knowledge in editorial writing, they decided to operate by the democratic procedure. Everyone voted and was permitted to contribute to the final judgment.

So that one person would not be tempted to influence another, they voted with their heads on their desks thereby not

observing the vote of others in the class. We capitalized on this point by informing them that they were capable young people and each had a right to his or her own independent and personal opinion. It's practical application was pointed out. This is a grave responsibility in every American's life in connection with the government of our country. They were urged and sincerely felt the desire to care for and not abuse this privilege.

The excitement over contest results was terrifically high! It was a thrilling experience for them to inform the winners and the other grades of their decisions.

Radios were brought to each of the four classrooms and all pupils were wide-eyed with anticipation over the prospect of hearing the voices of their classmates and friends by way of such an important medium. A tape recorder was busily capturing every word over WLBK. Flashbulbs were being used profusely at the radio station by the college photographer, who was warned that "we want pictures and plenty of them!"

The day following the broadcast, we all listened intently to the tape recording of that momentous culmination to all our planning and organization. There was much satisfaction among the sixth graders in knowing that they had completed "a job well done."

After the pictures had been developed, we placed these along with the winning editorials from each grade on the large bulletin board in the main corridor. It was a colorful and striking display which was informative to all other grades and all visitors.

It would be impossible to conclude

this account without a few words regarding the satisfaction we gained from working with the children on all phases of the project. Our early doubts about the editorial technique being used in the sixth grade proved groundless. In a comparatively short time the children had progressed from bald, bare statements of opinions to well-organized, sound, supported theses on subjects ranging from good sportsmanship to vivisection. The enthusiasm and businesslike way in which they approached social, personal, and controversial issues confirmed our first suspicions that they were ready and interested in thinking of these problems. This was clearly illustrated in the almost one hundred editorials submitted for the contest. A most cursory examination of the editorials also indicated considerable growth in the written language skills.

In the social developmental areas we had additional opportunities to develop skill in working with committees, in democratically stating and solving problems, and in planning and carrying through a job. The contest idea involved both stimulating competition and, more important, cooperative planning and participation so often overlooked and undeveloped in competitive activities.

Although we considered the project successful and of value in itself, we would like to point out the potentials of such a beginning as a basis for more advanced work in later grades.

The following are some of the editorials written by the sixth graders and entered in the contest. The first two are the winning editorials from the sixth grade.

#### Are You Pals With Your Pet?

Do you have a pet? If you do, does it want to be yours? How do you treat it? I hear someone say, "Sure it wants to be mine. I feed it, don't I?" Oh, but does it really want you? Sure you feed it, but what do you feed it? Does it eat what you give it? Do you change his food sometimes?

You should sometimes give a little time to your pet. Do you? Play with it; give it exercise. When do you do these things? I have a dog. When I forget it and don't play with it, it is lonely. It thinks that I don't like it anymore, and it probably wants someone who will pay attention to it. If I play with it, we have a lot of fun and then it knows I like it.

Do you want your pet to like you? If you do, why not give it a little more attention? See how much better you'll get along with your pet if you are both good pals!

#### Necking at the Movies

Whenever I go to a movie I will be enjoying it until some girl will come with her boy friend and sit right in front of me. There would be plenty of room for me to see if they would keep their heads where they are supposed to be instead of touching each other.

If they want to neck, why don't they stay at home? They don't look at the movie because they are too busy looking at each other.

#### Clerks vs. Customers

Did you ever go into a store when you are in a hurry? The clerk may be ambitious, but lots of times they are lazy. You wait around trying to get waited on, but the clerk is talking to a friend and says, "Just a minute." Customers do not like that and sometimes walk out. That is not only bad for the customers but for the store as well. Then too, a clerk sometimes waits on a large order, the customer looking at something else to decide if he or she wants to buy it. The clerk could wait on someone else with a short order and kill two birds with one stone. I think

(Continued on Page 290)

# *Preschool Social Growth through Language*

IDA J. CURRY<sup>1</sup>

Language growth and development is stimulated by the child's needs. In his attempt to enlist aid in meeting these needs, the child discovers the function of language. When adult rather than child needs are emphasized before the child has a chance to become aware of them, he may be denied the opportunity to reach his maximum growth in language. On the other hand, the adult's insistence upon language competence in the growing child can be so intensified that the child's emotional and social growth may be retarded or jeopardized.

Too often adults become impatient and disturbed when they are unable to observe, let us say, an acceleration in language growth immediately after the child begins to talk. If, at this point, the child is urged or pressed beyond his ability, he will very likely become discouraged and may even refuse to try. Furthermore, needs which are encouraged by the lack of love and security from parents may in many cases retard the language growth that may well cause stuttering or simply retardation in speech. Like behavior, language development may be greatly influenced by other currents in the child's life, such as shyness, fear, or ridicule. Since the child should not be made to struggle for language beyond a certain level, adults must try to find that point in which he may get the maximum of language growth without interfering with his future social growth as well as his health. Any education at the expense of nerve energy may prove detrimental to the

development of the whole child.

To illustrate further, pressure for language development carried to any great degree may produce the same effect on the desired development of a child, as in the case of a mother of a four-year-old boy who wishes her son to become a great fisherman. Let us assume that a boy naturally comes to the time when he begins to enjoy fishing at the age of twelve. The mother teaches him how to put the worm on the hook and then sits quietly by for hours watching the cork to see if he has a bite. Although the child does not seem to derive any pleasure from the activity, the mother trains him to continue to work at it by withdrawal of security when he fails to comply with her wishes. She may wholly ignore him when he refuses to fish, but on the other hand, she may praise and kiss him when he fishes. She may sacrifice her whole life to make him a great fisherman to the extent that when he becomes twelve years old he is a good fisherman, but gets no joy from it. He, indeed, may hate it, but continues at it because he has been conditioned to believe that since he has become a great fisherman all the real things in life must now surely be his. Later, he may take out a twelve year old boy who has never fished before, to teach him to fish. The new boy perhaps thinks and feels that this is a wonderful experience. He dances with joy when he pulls out his first fish, and he says, "This is wonderful. I wish my mother had taught me to fish like

<sup>1</sup>On leave from Hampton Institute.



you." Because of the joy that this new boy receives from his new experience, his imagination begins to function, and he wonders how a new bait might work; so, among other things, he tries it. In a few months he is by far a better fisherman than the boy who has been forced to work at it for six years. The difference in the rate of learning and the degree of enthusiasm of these two boys lies in the fact that the latter learned quickly because he really enjoyed fishing. He learned to solve his problems without unpleasant interferences.

The innumerable questions that children ask between the ages of three and six usually serve as an excellent device toward improving their language abilities. It might be of interest to listen to a series of questions asked by a three year old child upon seeing a soldier leave his home: Where is the soldier going? Do soldiers have aeroplanes? Do soldiers have houses? Where will the soldier sleep? Can I be a soldier? Will the soldier catch the train? Where is the train, downtown? Will the soldier come back? Has the soldier any money? It is reasonable to assume that the impetus to such questions can be accounted for by an inquiring mind, as well as sheer sociability.

In Piaget's analysis of the language content of children, he divides speech into two classes: egocentric speech and socialized speech. Egocentric speech, according to Piaget, is speech which has no social function. The child talks without caring who listens, and without trying to get the other person's point of view. His speech represents a form of what Piaget calls "col-socialized speech the child addresses the listener; he considers the other person's point

of view and attempts to share meanings and exchange ideas. Piaget feels, however, that a large percentage of young children are primarily egocentric in their thinking and that they do not shift to socialized thinking until about seven years of age. He discovers little, if any, evidence of logical reasoning in the child's thinking up to seven years. Other investigations, however, find discrepancies in Piaget's theory.

It is generally thought that children who associate with adults and older children show in the early stages of language development a more fluent vocabulary than children who do not share the same experience. However, the valuable social experiences to be gained by association with children around the same age level should not be discounted. It is further thought that there is a tendency for girls to be more advanced than boys in language development. Girls have a larger vocabulary, and they begin to use longer and more complex sentences earlier than boys. However, it has been found that these differences disappear with increasing age.

During the preschool years the child is constantly reaching out socially and discovering the use of language as a medium of social communication. At this age, he is influenced by the language pattern he hears around him. The fertility of his ideas, and the accuracy of his expression, as well as the richness of his vocabulary, may well depend, to a great extent, upon his experiences. Let us say then that both the home and school should be starting points for building excellent backgrounds for language growth.

In the light of this modern concept of language development in the child, what principles and procedures are followed in the preschool to stimulate the child's growth?

One of the main objectives of the preschool is to stimulate and encourage creative expressions among the children, and at no time is the total adjustment of the child overlooked. Children have the opportunity to talk as well as to listen.

First of all, there is no special period set aside for language development. Instead, language growth is encouraged in a casual, unobtrusive, and natural manner throughout the various activities of the day. These activities may be the free and constructive play periods, the routine activities, the organized periods of music, stories, conversation, or it may be just conversation on a toy telephone. The child is encouraged to express himself with a feeling

of adequacy no matter where the opportunity presents itself. Although correct grammar is encouraged, it is never allowed to interfere with the child's thought nor to make him self-conscious about his speech. For example, if a child approaches the teacher with overenthusiasm about a recent experience and says, "Miss Smith, I seed a steam shovel when we went for a walk this morning." The teacher might answer by saying, "I saw a steam shovel also when we went for a walk this morning."

The content of the language in the preschool is at all times meaningful to the child. And most of all, the good preschool aims to provide teachers who are not only able to set good examples of clear enunciation, phrasing and vocalization, but teachers well rounded in their own personality development. Finally, the pre-school provides for the child a calm, free, and happy environment so that he may grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

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#### EDITORIAL - WRITING IN SIXTH GRADE

(Continued from Page 287)

you and I and everyone should do something about it.

If you have any ideas or complaints tell them to the store managers. Maybe they will do something about it.

Better Vivisection

The vivisection society should keep up

their good work they are doing for diseases. But why can't they find another way of experimenting than with healthy dogs and animals? Couldn't they use animals that are almost dead anyway? They won't have to suffer as much as healthier animals. I don't think they should just pull dogs off the street without knowing who they belong to.

## Did You Know--

*That ELEMENTARY ENGLISH is an official organ of the National Council of Teachers of English?* In particular, it represents the Elementary Section of the Council. Persons who join the organization are automatically entitled to receive whichever of the Council journals they prefer. This seems a good reason for all subscribers to *Elementary English* to be members of the Elementary Section of the Council, especially since they may then purchase at reduced prices monographs of the Council as, for example, the report, *English Language Arts*, just published.

That there are junior memberships in the English Council? Any student who is preparing to teach English or the language arts and who is studying at least half-time (not engaged in paid teaching to the extent of more than one-half a normal teaching load) may become a junior member by paying \$1.75. Then he will receive eight monthly issues of *Elementary English*. Applications for membership must come through college instructors, who shall certify to the applicants' eligibility. The Council office furnishes blanks.

*That the Elementary Section Committee is anxious to serve you?* Each year this committee works on some project. At present, its members are continuing one which was launched under the leadership of the former chairman, Hannah Lindahl; namely, circularization of school personnel in respect to the values and availability of *Elementary English*. A new project is to run a monthly page in the magazine on which the various members of the Elementary Section Committee editorialize

certain aspects of the English Council's program.

In addition, each committee member is suggesting the names of persons who might submit valuable articles to *Elementary English*. Also Dr. Leland Jacobs of the committee is interested in securing reports of forward-looking language arts programs in schools over the country. Other projects are under consideration.

*That you can help?* There are several ways in which you, *Elementary English's* readers, can help to promote the development of vital and effective language arts programs in our schools. Can we count on you? These are some of the ways.

1. Join the Council if not already a member. Share your *Elementary English*, then encourage teachers to subscribe for themselves. Let us double or triple the number of teachers and students reading this stimulating magazine before June of this year.
2. Order pamphlets and other publications of the English Council that will give you up-to-date suggestions for improving your teaching. The Council has a publications list which will be mailed to you on request. Watch the Council advertisements in *Elementary English*.
3. If you are preparing future teachers of the language arts, give your students the opportunity to become junior members. Thus you may help to encourage continued professional growth after graduation.

4. If you have vitalizing experiences to share, you may do so in one of two

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## Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, ADELINE C. BARTLETT, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*Chairman*), ARCHIBALD A. HILL, ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT, JAMES B. McMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS, AND JOHN N. WINBURNE.<sup>1</sup>

A New York City teacher asks: "How can I teach my pupils to use *who* and *whom* correctly? Despite repeated drill and continued correction on my part, most of my boys and girls, even those from homes where the parents are well educated, persist in saying such sentences as *Who do you favor?* and *Who did you give the ticket to?*"

The "rules" for the "correct" uses of *who* and *whom*, which have been learned by untold thousands of American school children in generations past and which are still to be found in some elementary and secondary school texts and practice materials, have been found by the best studies of the structure and usage of modern English to be no longer descriptive of the actual "grammar" of educated people in the majority of instances. Before examining the question asked further, it would be in order to clarify the notion of "correctness" in the English language of our day. If Standard English is defined as the English actually spoken and written by a majority of the better-educated people in our society—and we are primarily concerned as teachers of English in America with American society—then we must recognize that there are different levels of usage, even within this Standard American English. Professor Pooley writes: "The range of Standard English is necessarily very wide. It must include all the words, phrases, forms, and idioms employed by the great mass of English-speaking people in the United States whose dialect lies between the homely level and the decidedly literary level. It must be wide enough to include the variations of language usage common among people of education; the speech of the home, of the hours of business and recreation, as well as that of the party and formal reception. In written form it

must include the most informal of personal correspondence to the formal phrasing of the business and social note. Standard English is, in fact, *the language*; it is present, ordinary, comfortable usage, with sufficient breadth in limits to permit of the shades of difference appropriate to specific occasions."<sup>2</sup>

"Correctness" in Standard English itself cannot be a set of absolutes; "correctness" is a relative term even within this area. Words and expressions that may be out of place in formal speaking and writing situations may be, and often are, perfectly appropriate in the many informal situations occurring in the everyday lives of educated people. To prescribe as the only "correct" forms those words and sentences employed by educated persons in their relatively infrequent formal uses of the language is to ignore the far greater frequency of the informal speech and writing of these same educated persons. And the only scientifically sound basis for our notions of "good grammar" is the *actual uses* of the language by the educated groups in our country today, to the best of our ability to determine what these actual uses are.

We have developed a feeling, over a long period of time, for two parts of the sentence, what Professor Fries has called the "subject" territory and the "object" territory.<sup>3</sup> We tend

<sup>1</sup>Members of the Current Usage Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English.

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*, pp. 19-20. New York: D. Appleton-Century-Crofts Co., 19—.

<sup>3</sup>Charles C. Fries, *American English Grammar*, p. 255. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1940.



to feel that a noun or pronoun coming before the verb, that is, in what normally is "subject territory" ought to be in the "subjective" or nominative case. In the case of nouns there is no "grammatical problem," since English nouns have long since lost the end inflections they once had for the nominative and accusative cases. We depend on word-order alone to tell us that "boy" is subject in "The boy hit the ball" and object in "The ball hit the boy."

In the cases of some of our pronouns, however, we still have distinctive case forms for the nominative, accusative, and genitive functions. But so great has our feeling for "subject territory" become, that we say "*Who* do you favor?" "*Who* did you give the ticket to?" because the pronoun comes at the beginning of the sentence, where we usually expect the subject to occur. Our feeling for this "subject territory" is greater than our feeling for the "strict syntax" of the sentences, which is, of course, that "who" is the object of the verb, "do favor," in the first sentence, and the object of the preposition, "to," in the second. It is basic to an understanding of modern English to realize that the often "illogical" forces of human psychology have a much greater influence upon the structure of the language than do considerations of purely "formal" relationships.

Pooley writes: "In the initial position in questions, *who* is far more prevalent than *whom* even though it may be grammatically the object of a following verb or preposition. On the contrary, when the pronoun immediately follows the verb or preposition cultivated usage requires the objective form as in 'For whom was it sent?' 'You saw whom?'"<sup>4</sup>

Fries writes of the written materials of his study: "Every instance of the interrogative pronoun appeared with the form *who*, the nominative rather than the dative—accusative form... Expressions such as 'Who do you refer to?' are typical of Standard English."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Pooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>5</sup>Fries, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

The New English Dictionary says of "who": "Common in colloquial use as object of a verb or preposition following at the end of a clause."

The linguists polled by Sterling A. Leonard in *Current English Usage* rated "*Who* are you looking for?" as established."<sup>6</sup>

That the use of "who" in sentences of this sort is established in the ordinary, everyday speech of educated people in America (those who speak Standard American English) seems certain. That being the case, it is no longer sensible for us to tell our students that their grammar is "bad" or "incorrect" when they use such sentences in the same informal situations as do educated adults.

There will probably continue to be a preference for such sentences as "*Whom* did the President appoint?" and "*Whom* shall we forward the letter to?" in those few situations where we feel constrained to be "formal," for sometime to come—not because these expressions communicate any more effectively, but solely because educated people feel a compulsion to "correctness" in certain, occasional situations. In time, it is possible that "who" will replace "whom" even on these occasions.

Since our children must learn to behave differently in different social situations, why shouldn't they learn to use their language differently for differing situations? Our children's growth in their ability to use the English language fluently and imaginatively cannot be fostered by seeking to impose arbitrary and outmoded notions of correctness upon them. With respect to "who" in the normal speech of youngsters, "Who do we play next week?" and "Who are you for?" the best advice is to ignore it! Since the Standard English-speaking adults in the world about them use "who" in similar sentences in their everyday speech,

<sup>6</sup>Cited by Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, *Facts About Current English Usage*, pp. 80-81. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 19—.

there is simply no valid reason for regarding such sentences as "bad grammar" when spoken by children. If, in the upper years of elementary school, we want to teach our boys and girls the still prevailing niceties of formal speech-making and letter-writing, we may tell them that it is advisable to use "whom" as the in-

troductory word in sentences of these kinds. But let us be honest if we do; let us tell them only that many grownups will expect it of them on such occasions—not that "whom" is the form they should always employ.

Edward L. Anderson

New York University

### DID YOU KNOW.....

(Continued from Page 291)

ways. Write an article for *Elementary English*, or send a report to Dr. Leland Jacobs.

5. You may write to any member of the Elementary Section Committee, suggesting areas where teachers need help and ways in which the committee may be of service. These persons are: A. S. Artley, University of Missouri; Mildred A. Dawson, University State Teachers College,

Fredonia, N. Y.; Leland Jacobs, The Ohio State University; Hannah Lindahl, Public Schools, Mishawaka, Ind.; Fannie J. Ragland, Public Schools, Cincinnati; Grace Rawlings, School 64, Baltimore 7; Ruth Swanbeck, Keewaydin School, Minneapolis.

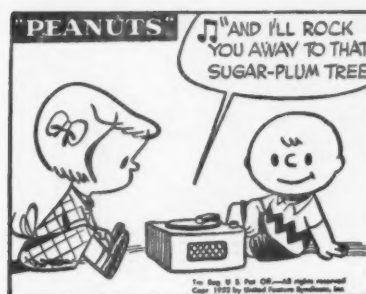
We are expecting to hear from you.

—Mildred A. Dawson, Chairman,  
Elementary Section Committee.

## Look and Listen

Edited by RAOUL R. HAAS<sup>1</sup>

and MARY A. CUNNINGHAM<sup>2</sup>



One of the more valuable instructional aids to effective teaching is the phonograph with its vast library of recordings. This teaching device, one of the oldest in use in the schools, is to-day more versatile than ever. Advances in electronics have greatly increased its efficiency in reproducing the human voice and the instruments of the world—musical and mechanical—with high fidelity.

Recordings meet the requirements for the effective utilization of audio aids as well or better than most other media. There is a wide range of material available for correlation with curriculum needs. The teacher may easily preview recordings before presenting them to his class. He may decide to use only portions of the record and may stop the playing for discussion at any point. In addition recordings may be heard as many times as necessary to attain the objectives of the lesson.

Follow-up and review are perhaps more easily achieved with recordings than with other audio devices. Simplicity of operation is a factor not to be overlooked. Finally, recordings are more or less permanent and relatively inexpensive—both important considerations in the wise expenditure of school funds for audio-visual instructional materials.

In language arts classes, recordings may be employed to bring vitality to the study of literature—prose, poetry, drama and speech. In the study of Shakespeare, for example, one may follow the reading of great actors with the text before him. Comparisons of the interpretations given by respected names in the

theatre may be made — for example, the reading of Hamlet's "To be" soliloquy by Barrymore and Olivier. Recordings presented in combination with pictures, slides, films and objects makes Shakespeare a contemporary and bring his dramas to life.

From the kindergarten through the graduate level, recordings provide an unending source of materials. Mother Goose to Chaucer (the latter read in Middle English, if one desires) is available for stimulating interest in literature and for making its study more meaningful.

The phonograph recording is an invaluable source of material for the social studies, too. The songs and music of a culture or an ethnic group may help to provide understanding of the society being studied. The actual voices of the men and women who make or have made history have been preserved on discs. Columbia's series with Edward Murrow, *I Can Hear It Now*, deserve your attention in this connection. Dramatizations of significant events and great moments in history assist teachers in making concepts clear and in transmitting an appreciation of our cultural heritage.

Despite the enthusiasm which records should inspire in teachers, there are one or two cautions to be observed in their utilization. They may, in the same way that the instruc-

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Haas is Director, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.

<sup>2</sup>Miss Cunningham is a member of the English faculty, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.



("Peanuts" reprinted by permission of United Feature Syndicate)

tional films may, lose their effectiveness by over-emphasis and by failure to integrate, follow-up, and evaluate. As with any good teaching aid, recordings should be used only when they are suitable and when they can do the task better than may be achieved by any other means.

The recordings reviewed this month have been carefully evaluated to assist teachers and parents in making purchases for school and home use. They are classified roughly according to age groups—pre-school and primary, intermediate and upper grade and senior high school.

The criteria employed by the reviewers in analyzing the recordings included, in addition to matters of technical and mechanical factors, the value of the records in stimulating interest in literature and other subject matter areas, in presenting information, in satisfying the emotional needs of young people and their possible uses, if any, in modifying the attitudes and behavior patterns of the listener.

#### *Recordings for the Pre-School and Primary Grade Child*

● *Guess What I Am and Guess Who I Am.* Steve Nelson Song Games. "Sparkie," with Ray Carter's orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Columbia. (MJV-106)

Here are two singing games which will develop vocabulary and provide experiences in auditory discrimination. The listener is asked to identify common farm animals and various

types of motor vehicles through the lyrics. Young children will enjoy these games although more than one listening will probably be necessary to make the identifications. It is felt that a slower tempo would facilitate the child's successful participation. May be used in the reading readiness program.

● *Hansel and Gretel.* Richard Hayes and June Winters with orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 11)

It is strange — and, in our opinion, not appropriate — that the Sunday School Hymnal should have been raided for background music for this recording. The score is not consistent nor is the adaption true to the brothers Grimm. The witch has been made less fearsome than is sometimes the case with this tale and this is, perhaps, the most commendable thing about the disc.

The record label presents a problem in that sides 1 and 2 are not indicated, either by number or picture clue. This defect should be remedied for ease in playing.

● *Henny Penny.* Narrated by Martha Blair Fox. Music directed by Paul Sells. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Fox Records. (M-22)

The opening bars of "Old MacDonald" introduces the popular tale of Henny Penny and her search for the golden eggs. Cumulatively, we meet Cocky-Locky, Ducky Lucky, Turkey Lurky, and finally, the villain of the



piece, Foxy Loxy. Boys and girls of primary grade ages will find this adventure fun to listen to, although it may be necessary to hear it several times to get the rather involved story through to them. This defect is due, in our opinion, to the unfortunate phrasing employed by Miss Fox whose voice, both in speaking and singing, is otherwise pleasant and effective.

Sound effects are realistic and handled with restraint. The small orchestra provides a suitable background. A classroom utilization manual is available.

● *Little Tug That Tried, The*. Narrated by Martha Blair Fox. Organ accompaniment by Buddy Cole. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records. Fox Records. (M-21)

This is the story of a little ship loaded with Christmas trees. Stuck in a mudbank just two days before Christmas, the ship asks in vain for help from assorted vessels—liner, tramp and warship. Finally, the little tug tries—and tries—and does free the ship in time to deliver its cargo.

These records may be used to promote desirable attitudes toward sharing and helpfulness, perseverance and common courtesy. They are recommended especially for their value in providing auditory experiences with such familiar ocean-and lake-side sounds as the fog horn, boat whistles, ship's bells, etc.

The organ accompaniment is effective and suitable. Miss Fox reads this story with sincerity and conviction, although the writers find her phrasing choppy. The album is colorful and contains a name and color game to motivate the child's active listening.

● *Mother Goose*. Unidentified baritone and alto, Kitty Kallen, chorus, orchestra and sound effects. Six 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records. Mercury Childcraft Records. (CMG 1-6)

A series of six *Mother Goose* records selected and approved by the editors and publishers of *Childcraft* and produced by Mercury Records. The familiar rhymes are handsomely

told and sung with excellent projection and clarity of pronunciation. The musical settings are interesting. The surfaces of the entire series are excellent.

The voice of the baritone, who performs on four of the discs, represents a happy choice for these familiar nursery songs. His interpretation is child-like and will appeal to the young listener. It is unfortunate that the identity of the singer has not been published.

Miss Kallen records discs 5 and 6. Her singing voice is superior to her speaking voice. Her narration is condescending, but her singing is pleasant and sincere. Her projection is good and her enunciation clear. The use of a chorus adds to the pleasing musical arrangements.

One of the notable features of this series of *Mother Goose* recordings is the restrained use of sound effects—a welcome relief from the barking and mewling found in so many versions of these nursery songs.

● Potter-Sokoloff: *Peter Rabbit* and Milne: *When We Were Very Young*. Gene Kelly with orchestra conducted by Paul Affelder. One 10-inch 33 1/3 rpm record. Columbia. (JL 8008)

This adaptation of *Peter Rabbit* is faithful to the original Potter classic. Gene Kelly reads the exciting adventure against a winning musical background composed by Herbert Hunfrecht. Kelly's voice is pleasant, warm and never condescending. The disc is especially recommended for both home and school use.

The second side contains eight of Milne's poems set to music by H. Fraser-Simson and sung by Kelly. This face will appeal to all who enjoy Milne's whimsy. Kelly's handling of these songs is delightful and children (adults, too!) will wish to hear this recording again and again. Recommended for use in intermediate grade literature and music classes, also. Poems included are: *Hoppity*, *Politeness*, *Halfway Down*, *The Four Friends*, *At the Zoo*, and *In the Fashion*.

● *Peter Rabbit and Rumpelstiltskin*. Adapted by John A. Richards and told by Paul Wing with supporting cast. Music composed and conducted by Norman Leyden. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. RCA Victor. (Little Nipper Series, Y-429)

*Peter Rabbit* has a gay and appealing introduction which will quickly catch the attention of pre-school and primary grade children. The adaptation is not, however, faithful to the Beatrix Potter tale.

Less attractive is *Rumpelstiltskin*, which fails, in our opinion, to capture the magic of this well-known fairy tale. The assisting players in both are well cast and the musical background is charming. Wing is to be commended for his excellent diction. His sincerity in reading will attract young listeners.

● *Pinocchio*. Adapted from the Walt Disney film by John A. Richards. Music arranged by Norman Leyden. Orchestra conducted by Henri René. Narrated by Cliff Edwards as Jiminy Cricket. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records. RCA Victor. (Little Nipper Series, Y-385)

This free adaptation from the famous tale is entertainingly presented by Cliff Edwards and a well-balanced supporting cast. The illustrations in the storybook album are from the Walt Disney film and are printed in full-color.

This album is very popular with first and second grade children and the appeal for honesty and mutual helpfulness is readily accepted by them. The records may be used to motivate interest in puppetry as well as in the original story. The popular song, Washington-Harline's "When You Wish Upon A Star," is featured. Also suitable for the intermediate grades.

● *Shoemaker and the Elves, The*. Richard Hayes and June Winters with orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 12)

A musical version of the fairy tale, this is

an innocuous and not particularly outstanding recording. The voices of Hayes and Winters, both in song and narration are pleasant, although Mr. Hayes seems to have a tendency towards a slurred es which is somewhat annoying and lessens the value of this record from a speech point of view. The musical score is competent and reminiscent of some of the popular Hollywood offerings.

Neither number nor picture clue is employed to identify sides 1 and 2 on the record label.

● *Tunes for Tots*. Scripts and scores by Herb Plattner and Hugh Perrette. Unidentified baritone, chorus and orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 7)

A collection of charming little songs about clocks, steeple bells, raindrops, a teakettle, etc. They are intended for children two years of age and younger. It is our opinion, however, that they are too sophisticated musically and that the vocabulary burden is too difficult for children this young. Advanced three year olds were found to enjoy this disc. It is believed that some of the songs will have value in suggesting participation activities in the nursery school and kindergarten. The recording is generally acceptable in terms of the clarity and projection of the performers. A lisped es is again apparent in the voice of one of the male artists.

● *Tunes for Wee Folks*. Scripts and scores by Herb Plattner and Hugh Perrette. Unidentified tenor, baritone, chorus and orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 8)

This recording contains two extended story-songs, *Your Pal, Teddy* and *The Telephone Song*. This disc is also intended for children two years of age and younger. Musically they are pleasant, but it is the writers' opinion that they are too mature for the age group for which they are intended.

● *Milne: Winnie-the-Pooh and the Heffalump and Winnie-the-Pooh and Tigger*. Narrated by James Stewart. Adaptation by Steven R. Carlin. Music composed and conducted by Norman Leyden. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records in story book album. RCA Victor. (Little Nipper Upside-Down Album, Y-438)

This album proved pleasing to several children who have accepted Winnie-the-Pooh with great joy. They seemed to find this recording satisfying and played it often. Adults, even those who remain in maturity devotees of Milne, will find this version disenchanting.

James Stewart's voice is facetious, coy and childish. It is admittedly true that Milne is whimsical, but there is a sincerity in his writing that is no where apparent in Stewart's reading. The supporting cast is satisfactory, although we found the voices affected and frequently difficult to understand without the story book album before us. The musical setting is quite the best thing about this set.

#### *Recordings for the Intermediate and Upper Grade Pupil*

● *All Aboard the Showboat with Mr. I. Magination*. Paul Tripp, supporting cast and orchestra conducted by Ray Carter. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Columbia. (MJV-114)

A musical story with Mr. I. Magination of radio and television fame. This is a crisp, hummable performance with possible correlation value for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn*. The caliope is introduced and a traditional melodrama is briefly sketched. It has high entertainment value.

● *Champion (The Horse No Man Could Ride)*. Gene Autry with supporting cast. Story by Henry Walsh and Peter Steele. Music composed and conducted by Carl Cottner. One 10-inch, 33 1/3 rpm record. Columbia. (JL 8012)

This disc, bringing to records the technique employed in radio dramatizations, will appeal

to first and second graders as well as to pupils in the intermediate school. Regardless of a tendency on the part of educators to disapprove, the "western" provides adventure and excitement which meets a real need of boys and girls. The recordings of Autry avoid bloodshed and cruelty and the emotional element is controlled by careful writing and understatement. Personal honesty and integrity is stressed as well as the development of moral and physical courage.

*Champion* is the story of Autry's winning his famous horse. The supporting characters are well drawn and the so-called western ballad is introduced with restraint and good taste. This is one of the better recordings of the type and may be used to counteract the hoary western movies which are now so generally featured on TV.

● *Folk Songs of Other Lands*. Jack Russell with chorus and orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 10)

These familiar folk songs are offered first in the language of their origin and then in English. Especially interesting are the French *The Little Marionettes* and the German *Trot, My Pony, Trot*.

*A Funny Little Man Called Aiken Drum*, from Great Britain, is delightful and will be asked for again and again by boys and girls in the middle grades. Primary grade children will also enjoy these songs and they are suitable for classes in social science as well as music.

Jack Russell has a pleasing voice and the musical arrangements are both attractive and singable.

● *Folk Songs of Our Land*. Jack Russell with chorus and orchestra. One 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Mercury Childcraft Records. (No. 9)

This record has been literally worn through in repeated playings by a six and a three year

old! It is impossible to classify it by grade levels as its appeal is universal. The contagious rhythm of these early American folk songs and the splendid musical arrangements make this one of the outstanding releases of the new Childcraft series. Jack Russell has a fine, ringing voice especially appropriate for his material and the recording happily introduces a plaintive fiddler and a skilled banjoist.

Recommended without reservations, the disc contains *The Arkansas Traveler*, *Casey Jones*, *O Susannah* and *Git Along Little Dogies*.

● Irving-Tripp: *Mr. I. Magination Meets Rip Van Winkle*. Paul Tripp, supporting cast and orchestra conducted by Ray Carter. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records in picture story album. Columbia. (MJV-96)

This clever adaptation of the Irving tale by Mr. Tripp offers a pleasurable, if not completely authentic, introduction to the most famous of the Knickerbocker Histories. The songs, both music and lyrics, are reproduced in the colorful picture album and will be helpful to the teacher seeking material which children will enjoy singing.

Tripp's voice seems to be filled with laughter and young listeners will find his good humor infectious. Children's voices, which are employed in all the "Mr. I. Magination" series, are normal, wholesome, and delightfully free of affectation.

● *Nutcracker and King Mouse, The*. Adaptation and narration by Martha Blair Fox. Musical direction and arrangement by Ernestine Holmes. One 12-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Simmel-Meservey. (RR 12464-5)

This record provides a delightful introduction to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. Employing as background music excerpts from the ballet music, Miss Fox tells Hoffman's old fairy tale, *The Nutcracker and King Mouse*.

Especially appropriate for the Christmas season, the story tells of Marie's gift of a wooden nutcracker wrought in the shape of a

man. When it is broken, Marie carefully puts it to bed in her doll cradle and retires to dream of the nutcracker prince, the battle between the prince and King Mouse, and her trip to Jam Mountain where dwells the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The dream sequence is agreeably handled and Miss Fox reads the story with verve and integrity for the child's belief in magic. But reality prevails when Marie wakes to find herself in her own bed. And this, from the psychological point of view, is as it should be.

The disc may well be used at any season, however, when one wishes to use the fairy tale as a literary type. It is appropriate for upper primary as well as the intermediate grades; and adults, too, will find it good listening.

● Prokofieff: *Peter and the Wolf*, Op. 67. Narrated by Eleanor Roosevelt. The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor. One 10-inch, 33 1/3 rpm record. RCA Victor. (LM-45)

The writers, without having read Rudolph Elie, music critic of *The Boston Herald*, whose notes for this recording are of unusual interest, said at once on hearing this recording: It is as though a grandmother were telling a story to children whom she loves. And then we noted Elie's comment with reference to Mrs. Roosevelt's narration: "There (is) a very engaging quality of naiveté in her recitation of this familiar musical tale of a little boy who captures a wolf with a lasso let down from a tree. For here is no professional actor wringing the yarn dry of its every melodramatic moment with elocution, but a gentle lady telling a simple little story to her grandchildren before the fireplace, and the simplicity of her narration (brings) out as never before the detail of the music itself."

The familiar Prokofieff fairy tale brings to literature classes of the intermediate and upper grades a notable experience in the marriage of prose and music. It may well serve as a vehicle



for pantomime in speech and physical education classes. Music classes will find it an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with a theme and simple variations.

The Boston Symphony is in excellent form on this recording and Mrs. Roosevelt was a happy choice for the narrator as her voice quality lends itself admirably to the reading of this enchanting folk story. The recording is recommended without reservation for the senior high and adult levels also.

● *Shoemaker and the Elves, The*. Martha Blair Fox, with Ernestine Holmes, accompanist. One 12-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm record. Simmel-Meservey. (Tuneful Tales Series, No. 1)

An activity record designed especially for the classroom, this disc has the boys and girls participate in the elves' song before Martha Fox tells the story of the shoemaker. The adaptation of this tale by Miss Fox is artful and represents literature of a high order. The vocabulary employed is vivid and will provide opportunity for study and discussion.

The piano accompaniment by Ernestine Holmes is especially appropriate and well played. A flute obbligato serves as the theme for the elves. The disc is highly recommended for classes in music as well as the language arts.

● *Stampede*. Gene Autry and supporting cast with orchestra conducted by Carl Cottner. Story by Henry Walsh and Peter Steele. Music by Abraham Ellstein. One 10-inch, 33 1/3 rpm record. Columbia. (JL 8009)

This recording, somewhat more involved in plot than *Champion*, may be used to motivate interest in the southwest and, from the literary point of view, to illustrate rising action and climax particularly as employed in radio script writing. Perhaps its real value, however, lies in its entertainment value for boys and girls.

It is possible that we in education would motivate greater interest in the books of Will

James, Marguerite Henry and others if we employed such recordings as *Stampede* which, because they do give pleasure, would help bridge the gap to books and the entertainment they also provide.

Norman Cousins illustrates this aptly in a recent *Saturday Review* editorial: "(A) mistake made by many of us in the book world is to make books sound so confounded good for people that you can't blame them if they would rather die than read. Even goodness can be a crushing weight when it becomes compulsory. Or we will damn books by speaking of them with hushed awe. Overawed people are sometimes the most difficult to persuade."<sup>3</sup>

Experience has shown that recordings such as Autry's will serve as avenues to books.

● *Disney-Stevenson: Treasure Island, with Bobby Driscoll*. Music composed by Henri René, conducted by Paul Smith. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records. RCA Victor. (Little Nipper Series, Y-416)

The Walt Disney story-teller introduces a loose adaptation of Stevenson's classic tale of mystery and adventure. Mr. Bones is pretty meek, but Long John retains all his remembered ferocity and is given a heart of gold to boot.

Ben Gunn, Captain Smollett, Squire Trellawney, Dr. Livesey are all here. The dialogue is lively and in character, although Jim is asked to read such un-Stevensonian phrases as "I blacked out." Driscoll, as Jim Hawkins, reads his lines well and will appeal to boys especially.

These records will be helpful in motivating interest in the book itself and will meet the need for material about pirates. Treachery and greed and the tenderer qualities of justice and mercy are nicely blended.

The musical background is appropriate and the sound effects are well integrated in the narrative.

<sup>3</sup>*Saturday Review of Literature*. March 8, 1952. P. 22.

● **Alden:** *Why the Chimes Rang*. Adapted by Duncan MacDougald, Jr., and told by Ted Malone with Dick Leibert at the organ of the Radio City Music Hall. Two 10-inch, non-breakable, 78 rpm records. RCA Victor. (Youth Series, Y-357)

This Christmas story will have limited appeal. Reminiscent of "The Juggler of Notre Dame," the slow and rambling introduction loses rather than captures the interest of the listener. The narrative picks up on side 2, but no satisfying climax is ever reached.

Ted Malone's voice tends to be monotonous and he reads without the dramatic intensity which should characterize this morality story. This, perhaps, is reassuring for a sensitive listener, but does not provide the contrast implicit in the narrative.

The organ music is appropriate to the content of the tale; but here, too, understatement, in the pealing of the chimes, detracts rather than adds to the cumulative effect.

The record is uneven in that Malone is at times speaking too softly for comfortable listening.

#### *Recordings for the Senior High School Student*

● **The Bible, Readings from.** Ronald Colman. One 10-inch 33 1/3 rpm record. RCA Victor. (LM 124)

This disc may be used to illustrate the beauty and power of our language as revealed in the poetry and prose of the Scriptures. It should find a very real place in a survey course in English literature. Too, it may be employed for purposes of comparing the sonority of the King James's version with some of the blank verse of Shakespeare and others. Students in speech will find Colman's voice quality, diction, enunciation, and interpretation valuable as illustration of the range of the human voice.

Mr. Colman has chosen selections from Samuel, Job, Solomon, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and Revelation.

● **Shakespeare:** *Hamlet*. Laurence Olivier in excerpts from his motion picture production with the Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Muir Mathieson. One 10-inch, 33 1/3 rpm record. RCA Victor. (LP LCT 5)

The excerpts on this record were derived from the sound track of the J. Arthur Rank Production. With the exception of two selections Oliver is presented alone in Hamlet's famous soliloquies and meditations. The music throughout is the original composition of William Walton.

The disc contains five scenes, including the soliloquies "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt," and "To be or not to be." The writers disagree with Olivier's reading of the "To be" speech, but feel that it will provoke valuable discussion as to interpretation. The musical background provides heightened emotional appeal and with the sixth band, "Funeral March," will be useful to music students interested in the work of contemporary composers.

This recording has particular value for literature and speech classes and may be used to stimulate interest, particularly when presented with available filmstrips of the tragedy, to reluctant high school readers of Shakespeare.

● **Robin Hood.** Basil Rathbone with supporting cast, chorus and orchestra. Dramatic version by Ralph Rose. One 10-inch, 33 1/3 rpm record. Columbia. (ML 2063)

"Of all the hero cycles, *Robin Hood* is unquestionably the children's favorite. It may not be the loftiest epic, nor Robin Hood the noblest hero, but his mad escapades, his lusty fights, his unfailing good humor when beaten, his sense of fair play and, above all, his roguish tricks and gaiety practically define 'hero' for children. . . . No hero lends himself to dramatization on screen or in classroom so readily as this gallant leader of the Outlaws."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Arbuthnot, May Hill. *Children and Books*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1947. P. 272.

(Continued on Page 307)

# The Educational Scene

Edited by

WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>

## NCTE Election Notice

In accordance with the constitution of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Board of Directors at its meeting last Thanksgiving Day chose Marion C. Sheridan, Harold A. Anderson, Robert C. Pooley, Angela M. Broening and Mark Neville as a Nominating Committee to propose officers for 1953. Through Marion Sheridan, the chairman, the committee offers these nominees:

For President, Harlen Adams, Chico, California

For First Vice-President, Lou LaBrant, School of Education, New York University

For Second Vice-President, Blanche Trezevant, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

For Secretary-Treasurer, W. Wilbur Hatfield, Chicago, Ill.

For Directors-at-Large:

Neal Cross, Chairman, Division of the Humanities, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colo.

Adelaide Cunningham, Roosevelt High School, Atlanta, Ga.

C. Wayne Hall, MacDonald College of McGill University, Quebec, Canada

James H. Mason, Arkansas State College, Jonesboro, Ark.

Fannie Jane Ragland, Supervisor, Intermediate Grades, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio

Margarete Teer, Laboratory School, College of Education, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

This slate will be presented for action at the meeting of the Board next November. Other nomination(s) may be made by petition(s) signed by twenty Directors of the

<sup>1</sup>John Deere Junior High School, Moline, Illinois.

Council and presented to the Secretary of the Council, with the written consent of the nominee(s) before August 16. When Dr. Sheridan moves the election of the committee's nominees, other nominations may be made by members of the Board.



The Children's Theatre Conference of the American Educational Theatre Association announces that their eighth annual convention will be held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, on August 28, 29, and 30, 1952. These meetings will emphasize the psychological impact of theatre for children upon both participants and audience. Following a keynote speech by a university psychologist, there will be plays, demonstrations, and lectures of interest to anyone concerned with children's growth. Among these will be a play produced by the University of Wisconsin, a trooping production by a high school group, a play in a tent theatre, as well as discussions of the international scene in children's theatre.

The convention will be preceded by a three-day workshop whose theme will be that creative theatre experiences may be based upon the integrated program in all of the arts. Children's theatre workers from many states will participate in practical classes and demonstrations with children and adults, to show how poetry, music, rhythms, art, and creative dramatics can all contribute to the total development of the child.

Further information may be secured by writing to Dr. Kenneth L. Graham, chairman of the Children's Theatre Conference, Department of Speech, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



A recent study conducted by the Graduate

Division of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio points out the effect of television on the school work of children. Titled *Of Children and Television* and financed by the Crosley Broadcasting Corporation, the study attempted to answer these two questions: (1) How do children who have television sets at home compare with other children in school achievement; (2) Do children having sets at home do better school work when their parents closely control their televiewing? Viewing habits and school achievement of about 1,000 students—sixth graders from the public schools and seventh graders from the parochial schools—were studied.

To omit the statistical details, it was found that the answer to both questions were negative: in general, children's learning is not affected by whether they have a television set in the home, and their learning is not affected very much by the way parents control televiewing.

The report cautions that the findings are not conclusive proof and that it would be a gross misinterpretation of the data to say that, for any given child, his habits of watching television do not affect his school achievement. It was found that "poorer television habits and lower IQ's and low parental controls and low achievement tend to be found in the same child."

Appended to the study, and as interesting as the primary findings, is a summary of the television habits of children. Here is a listing of the discoveries which we found of note:

75% of the children have television sets at home (Cincinnati has three stations).

Children watch television 5.6 hours on Saturday, 5.4 hours on Sunday, and 3.7 hours on school days.

52.6% had no programs they were not allowed to watch.

45.8% had some programs restricted from them.

For individual days of the week here are the first and second programs in terms of percent of children who watch them:

Monday: Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts 69%

Lights Out 55%

Tuesday: Milton Berle 86%

Suspense 36%

Wednesday: TV Theatre 52%

Arthur Godfrey 48%

Thursday: Stop the Music 62%

Big Town 49%

Friday: Big Story 60%

Twenty Questions 56%

Saturday: Show of Shows 49%

Big Top 46%

Sunday: Hopalong Cassidy 70%

Zoo Parade 49%

Two further points might be made about the study. The first is that the survey was made of commercial television. The effect that educational television will have on the learning process, it should be hoped, will be much more positive. In addition, the ability of the pupil to learn and the ability of his teacher to guide him, we believe, are the critical items in any measurement of the learning situation.

Teachers who wish to read *Of Children and Television* in the original may write to the Graduate Division of Xavier University, Cincinnati 8, Ohio. Copies are available on request.



A lively article which attempts once again to clarify "The Doctrine of Usage" appeared in the *Michigan Education Journal* for February. Professor Robert M. Limpus of Western Michigan College wrote the article in defense of one of usage's strongest advocates, Dr. Charles Fries. Dr. Fries had been accused by a newspaper of saying that "it don't make no difference if you bust many of the commonly-accepted rules of grammar."



Mr. Limpus points out the gravity of this misinterpretation and very cogently explains that the "doctrine of usage" does *not* say that the study of grammar is valueless; it does *not* say a person can say *ain't* in any society. The doctrine of usage does deny the validity of arbitrary patterns to which a language ought to conform; it recognizes that language (and the people who use it) does not behave the same way at all times and places. It implies that the true function of the English language teacher is "to help students say exactly what they mean and to say it in a way which will have the desired effect on an audience. Accuracy and effectiveness in communication are our twin goals, rather than conformity to an academically prescribed pattern."

Mr. Limpus' article points out that the English teacher should be an expert in language; he must have the ability to instill the ideals of accuracy and effectiveness in his students. Finally, in this age of the increased pressures of mass communications, the English teacher's role should be heightened.

The Madison (Wis.) Public Schools have recently put out two worthy pamphlets about writing—*Manuscript Writing in the Primary Grades* and *Creative Writing in the Elementary Grades*.

*Manuscript Writing* discusses the pros and cons of block letters for children and discusses problems in its teaching from the pre-school writing experiences to the transition to cursive writing.

*Creative Writing* discusses that side of the child which must develop if he is to achieve a personality all his own and if mankind is to crawl forward breaking with anachronistic patterns. The pamphlet peers into the wellsprings of spontaneous writing, how the child can be helped to build sensory images, and how the teacher may evaluate the creative writing product.

We suggest that teachers interested in obtaining a copy of either of these pamphlets write to the Curriculum Department, Madison Public Schools, Madison, Wisconsin.



"When teaching composition, be charitable. 'Make sure students get recognition,' declared teacher-author Max Herzberg, for, 'writing is work, pure work.' In fact, 'The saddest words of the English language,' he said, 'are *a theme for tomorrow*.'" He proceeded then to his six 'laws' of writing: (1) Writing is detestable, hard, while in progress, (2) Compulsion is the best motivation—meeting a deadline, (3) Rapid writing is not necessarily inferior, (4) Start writing—don't wait for inspiration, (5) Amateurs talk about outlining, professionals don't follow slavishly, and (6) Ideas come as one writes (just how no one knows exactly)."

—From *English Highlights*, Jan.-Feb., 1952.



Newberry-Caldecott book marks for 1952 with a complete listing of all award winners can be obtained now from the Children's Book Council. Decorated with the Newberry and Caldecott seals and printed on stiff paper measuring 9½ x 2½", the book marks are available for the first time in an assortment of bright colors. Orders may specify either a single color or a combination of green, gold, and blue. Prices are 100 for \$1.00. All requests should be addressed to the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19.



The 1952 edition of *Children's Books—for Seventy-Five Cents or Less*, compiled by Beatrice Hurley, has been released by the Association for Childhood Education International. Classification, price, and brief annotations are given for each book listed. It contains indexes by titles, author, and publisher. This bibliography will be useful in the home, the school,

and the library. Price 50 cents, 51 pages. Order from the Association at 1200 Fifteenth Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.



The U. S. Office of Education has recently released two more bulletins, *Teachers Contribute to Child Health* (No. 8, 1951), and *Modern Ways in One-and-Two Teacher Schools* (No. 18, 1951).

The first mentioned bulletin is based on the idea that classroom teachers in their daily contacts with boys and girls are the key persons in the school health program and that the school, as one of the significant agencies of the community, accepts its responsibility for contributing to individual, family, and community health. The bulletin points out what kinds of experiences help boys and girls to maintain or improve physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

The second bulletin is pertinent for in 1948 there were 75,000 one-teacher schools and 18,000 two-teacher schools in the United States with a total enrollment of 2½ million pupils. The bulletin contains suggestions for improving the programs of these schools through a discussion, not of techniques of teaching specific subjects, but of teaching procedures in general, selection of experiences, planning, evaluation, and cooperative activities.

*Teachers Contribute to Child Health, and Modern Ways in One-and-Two-Teacher Schools* may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price twenty cents each.



We should like to mention briefly the *National Elementary Principal* for December 1951 and for February 1952. The December issue discusses "The Assembly Program as a Learning Experience." The individual articles in the issue explore the possibilities of the assembly program, describe effective ways for

planning and using this educational technique, and list criteria for evaluating an assembly program. The topic of assemblies should be of interest to teachers of English, speech, dramatics, and librarians, since the planning too often is their lot.

The February issue has the general theme of "Orienting Pupils for the Secondary School." Modern views of the school program as continuous, consistent, and integrated are discussed, and promising practices which smooth out the elementary-junior high school escarpment to a more gently rounded curve are described.



Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of May, 1952:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years of age: *The Clean Pig* by Leonard Weisgard. Scribner's Sons, \$2.00.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years of age: *Old Rosie: The Horse Nobody Understood* by Lilian Moore and Leone Adelson. Random House, Inc., \$2.00.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *Boy Of the Pyramids* by Ruth Fosdick Jones. Random House, Inc., \$2.50.

For older girls, 12 to 16 years of age: *The Lonesome Sorrel* by Keith Robertson. John C. Winston Company, \$2.50.

For older boys, 12 to 16 years of age: *Big Mutt* by John Reese. Westminster Press, \$2.50.



Out of the 982 new children's books published in 1951, some 706 were reviewed favorably by the school and public librarians who appraise books for the *Library Journal*. Their reviews (including both pro's and con's where opinions differed) are reprinted in full in an attractive, illustrated 100-page booklet entitled "Recommended Children's Books of 1951." The arrangement is by grade and subject, with an index by author and title. To obtain a copy send \$1 to *Library Journal*, 62 W. 45 St., N. Y. 36, N. Y.

The Pennsylvania State College announces the fifth in a series of Coordinated Conferences in Education to be held on the college campus, June 23 to June 27.

The purpose of the Coordinated Conferences is to bring together workers in the fields of art education, audio-visual education, lan-

guage arts, psychology, special education, and speech education to share their common interests and concerns. Each conference offers the services of local, state, and national workers.

For further information, write Dr. Charles M. Long, School of Education, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania.

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### LOOK AND LISTEN

(Continued from Page 302)

This recording is placed at the senior high school level, although it may be used at the intermediate and upper grade levels, because of its especial value in introducing the ballads at the ninth grade. *Greensleeves*, for example, is introduced so naturally in the narrative that young students will quickly recognize that ballads came from and were a part of everyday living.

The recorded version, although based on the old legends, is entirely original. Mr. Rose

has achieved in his handling of the hero all of Robin's personal characteristics as enumerated by Arbuthnot. The main incident in this story is Robin's participation in the archery contest plotted by the Sheriff of Nottingham to capture Robin and his band and the return, at the climax, of King Richard.

Basil Rathbone, assisted by an excellent cast, makes this a stirring adventure which will be valuable in suggesting many activities throughout several grade levels.

# Review and Criticism

## *For the Teacher*

*Teaching Young Children.* By Roma Gans, Celia Burns Stendler, and Millie Almy. World Book Company.

The accumulating ideas and principles arising from the work of specialized professions, such as mental hygiene, pediatrics, and social work, accentuate the ever-present problem of incorporating such findings into educational practices. *Teaching Young Children*, dealing primarily with ages four to nine, brings to classroom teachers and others who are interested in children many basic considerations which should provide the framework for re-examination of school programs.

Illustrations from actual classroom situations and excerpts from anecdotal records of individual children help to translate these principles into the language and experience of those who are faced with the responsibility of guiding children's growth. Nursery, kindergarten, and primary programs are viewed in light of the continuous development of children, rather than as separate programs.

There are four major parts in the organization of material. Part I deals with conditions directly affecting young children. The impact of our particular culture, with its contradictory value-systems, is examined together with the basic growth process of children. Part II analyzes curricular patterns that are present in many school situations, pointing out underlying assumptions and raising issues which must be faced in selecting and organizing effective learning experiences. The implications of a social-psychological approach to curriculum planning are emphasized in a way that will help teachers see the necessity for bringing about changes in behavior that are consistent with the needs of present-day democratic so-

ciety. Practical suggestions for planning with and for children in terms of a good school day will be helpful to many teachers. Evaluation of these experiences is seen as an integral part of the learning process, "not something we do *to* the child or *for* him, but rather *with* him." Thus, teachers must work with children in this area, as well as in others, to foster all-round growth. Various ways of studying children, of gaining insights into all phases of development are offered as practical suggestions and serve to point up the challenge of evaluating progress toward the realization of broad educational goals.

The authors' point of view is clearly brought out in Part III which examines the traditional subject matter fields from the standpoint of the learner, as exemplified by the topic headings: The Child as a Reader, as a Speaker, Writer, Listener, as a Mathematician, as a Social Scientist, as a Scientist, and as an Artist and Musician. Throughout, stress is placed on the ways in which they organize and bring meaning to the world in which they live. Problems arising in connection with the teacher's role in providing stimulating situations which will foster individual creativity and exploration and help to fix learnings where needed are faced realistically.

The final section on school organization and home-school relations considers ways in which cooperative efforts can implement desirable programs meeting the needs of young children. Warmth, acceptance, wise guidance (with reference to the long-term welfare of the child) are essentials in assuring the kind of experiences which young children should be able to claim as their rights.

—Aleyne Clayton Haines

Queens College  
Flushings, New York



*Teaching Children in the Middle Grades.* By

Alvina Treut Burrows. D. C. Heath.

The middle years of childhood, the nine to twelve-year-old period, has long been noted as a neglected one in the psychological field. We have had countless studies of the young school child and countless studies of the adolescent, but the years between have passed almost unnoticed in the literature on child development.

This has also been apparent in books on the teaching of the pre-adolescent. Methods books for high school teachers and methods books for nursery school teachers abound, but again the in-between grades have received little attention.

Yet these are very important years for the older child. He is mature enough to be able to tackle problems of learning and problems of adjustment that he could not cope with at a younger age. He is facing new problems in social relationships, the solution of which will affect his later development.

Mrs. Burrows' book, then, is in an important and needed area since it deals with the teaching of children in later childhood. It is also a very fine and useful contribution to the area. Its content covers the whole range of teaching and learning in the middle grades—the development of the child, the various content areas such as social studies and science, the skills areas and the arts. Its age range covers the eight to eleven-year-old group.

The chapters containing case studies and some psychological considerations in middle childhood appear first in the book and set the tone for the whole volume. Mrs. Burrows sees a good school program as one which is concerned with the all-round development of the child. In these chapters, she presents the subject-matter of childhood, what teachers ought to know about mental, emotional, social, and physical development, and how school experiences affect and are affected by development

in these areas. Her presentation is clear-cut and her case studies excellent.

As might be expected by those who know the book, *They All Want to Write*, which Mrs. Burrows co-authored, she is particularly effective in the language arts field. The sections on speaking and writing skills and on the reading program present excellent practical suggestions for classroom activities incorporating the findings from research in these areas. The classroom teacher will be able to see very clearly how good school practices in these areas look in action. And scattered effectively throughout the book are many illustrations showing how these areas are related and can contribute to the personal development of children.

The section on the arts is written with an eye toward the encouragement of the creative and spontaneous in children. Again, there are many concrete suggestions for how teachers can do this, and at the same time build standards in children.

The book suffers in one respect. It does not orient the child in the world of today. One gets the impression of living going on within the four walls of the classroom, of a curriculum which does not recognize the kind of society in which we are living. Mrs. Burrows cannot be blamed for this. What this reviewer sees as a lack in this volume is a reflection of curricular practices in the middle grades in general, and a lack which is promoted by the textbook materials written for these grades. Seen outside the classroom, the pre-adolescent is an intellectually vigorous child. He wants to know about the world in which he lives and he demands subject-matter drawn from the fields of sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and political science, as well as history and geography. The unit on ancient Greece presented in this volume is a far cry from this. It might serve as a device for a number of in-

teresting and worthwhile activities, but the content itself is not suited to the pre-adolescent Mrs. Burrows describes. Curriculum workers need to do some serious thinking and planning for this age group, so that future books on teaching in the middle-grades can have better answers to the problem of subject-matter.

Celia Burns Stendler

### *For Early Adolescents*

*Big Family of Peoples.* By Irmengarde Eberle. Crowell, \$3.00.

Here is a readable presentation of civilization, its growth and spread, with the underlying theme being man himself, portrayed in his various backgrounds and eras. The book covers much of the same ground as *The Story of Mankind* by Van Loon though it is less involved for the young reader. The splendid chapters, "The Negroes" and "The Jews of Israel and for the young reader. The splendid chapters, "The Negroes" and "The Jews of Israel and the World" will alone make the book a usable addition to world history for young people. There is an index, though not fully detailed. Supplementary reading rather than a textbook for junior high school children.

Freda Freyer

*Picken's Exciting Summer.* By Norman Davis. Illustrated by Winslade. Oxford University Press, \$2.00.

A welcome addition to stories for small "jungle story" enthusiasts is this new Picken story by Norman Davis. *Picken's Exciting Summer*, the story of an African boy and his monkey Benjie is a sequel to Picken's *Great Adventure*.

Boys eight to twelve will share the strange and dangerous adventures of this son of a Gambian Chief. There are exciting voyages in shark-infested waters, an unexpected encounter with a hungry leopard in the village, and a narrow escape in a forest fire. The striking illustrations in green and black, including many full page ones, are at once a real appetizer for

reading the story. And youngsters who do read it will discover a true feeling of the African wilds without benefit, happily, of an unnecessary geography lesson.

Frances Rees

*The United Nations: Blueprint for Peace.* By Stephen S. Fenichell and Phillip Andrews. Winston, \$1.50.

The chief value of this book lies in its illustrations. There are nearly 100 photographs and nearly 20 charts, several of them full page. Children studying the U. N. and its agencies could profitably use this illustrative material even though the textual matter is too difficult and the print too small for them. Teachers should find it a useful source of factual information to supplement such a popular account as Eleanor Roosevelt and Helen Ferris' *Partners: The United Nations and Youth*.

Leonard S. Kenworthy

*Sawdust in his Shoes.* By Eloise Jarvis McGraw. Coward-McCann, \$2.50.

This is the story of Joe Langley, a veteran bareback rider at fifteen, son of a lion tamer and of a third generation circus family. Through the unexpected tragedy of his father's death, Joe is suddenly plunged into the everyday world beyond the smell of sawdust and the blare of the circus band. He is placed in an Industrial school while the law debates whether his father's old friend, the clown, is a proper guardian. Homesick and bored, he runs away to rejoin the circus, but gets lost and badly injures himself on a barb wire fence. He is found by a kindly Oregon farmer who, recognizing that he is a boy in trouble and in need of help, offer him a job on his farm. It is from the juxtaposition of the volatile, gifted, and prematurely world-wise Joe with the healthy, normal youngsters of the Dawson family that much of the suspense and conflict in the story comes. The action proceeds at a fast clip, but in the midst of exciting events, the young people learn to understand one another and there emerges, quite naturally, an excellent picture of how difficult human relationships can be-

come adjusted through kindness, patience, and common sense. This is Mrs. McGraw's first juvenile novel, and it is to be hoped that she continues to write in this field.

La Tourette Stockwell

*Elizabeth of the Mayflower.* By Myrtle J. Trachsel. Illustrated by Stephani Goodwin. Macmillan, \$2.50.

An accurate account of our Pilgrim Fathers portrayed through the eyes of the author's ancestor, Elizabeth. The story is well documented and the use of quotations from the diaries and records of the times adds to its value. It is unfortunate that it is a slow-paced story and interest lags at times. It will have a limited appeal for girls.

L. McCusker.

*Two for the Show: A Story of Shakespeare's England.* By Isabelle Lawrence. Bobbs-Merril, \$2.50.

Through the adventures of Nat Horne and Dick Greenwood, two young boys, the reader meets the important personages and becomes acquainted with the customs of Elizabethan England. Told in a style which may be enjoyed by adolescents and advanced readers in the pre-adolescent group, the book is a dramatic and authentic story of the Shakespearean stage written with the interests of young people in mind.

Ralph H. Thompson

*Barney Hits The Trail.* By Sara and Fred Machetanz. Illustrated by Fred Machetanz. Scribner, \$2.00.

Barney, on the heels of his eleventh birthday, hits the trail for Alaska to spend the winter with his uncle at Unalakleet. An amazing amount of information is packed into what is really an adventure story: details of the Eskimo's life in school, at home, and then at work with dog team, fishing, and prospecting for gold. Almost too informative to be palatable as a story...but not quite! and with excellent illustrations.

Frances E. Whitehead

*Ride Out the Storm.* By Margaret E. Bell. William Morrow, \$2.50.

Long Paul, thirteen-year-old Lisbeth's old sailor friend at Hermit Bay in Alaska, always said, "If storm comes up and there ain't no harbor, take to the deep water and ride her out." In that first tempestuous year in strange surroundings and associations of boarding school, Lisbeth discovered these words to be as applicable to life as to the sea. Furthermore, she had to fight to follow the advice. In spite of an obvious plot, the author has succeeded in writing with real sincerity and depth of feeling of human problems so close to the experiences of teen-agers in their effort to become accepted by their associates.

Frances Rees

*Student Dancer.* By Regina Woody. Illustrated by Arline K. Thomsom. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.75.

Janet Sherwood entered Monsieur Skatine's New York School of the Dance confident of her ability as a choreographer. She was satisfied to create dances for her friend Nata, but would not risk herself on the stage. By the end of the summer, her friends and teachers watched the stage as a new Janet emerged to dance her own creations.

The days in transition had been both difficult and happy ones. Janet had met with the inevitable crises resulting from professional jealousies, ambitions, and frustrations. On the other hand, sharing experiences with new friends, meeting great artists, being encouraged by sympathetic teachers helped Janet find a place in her chosen profession.

A rather thin plot is excusable in a book which presents in such a perfectly fascinating way the dance world from the inside. The appearance of such personalities as Martha Graham, Ted Shawn, Nora Key, and others in the story add an interesting touch. The illustrations by Arline Thomson, especially the decorated initial letters, are stunning.

Frances Rees

*For the Middle Grades*

*Lightning and Thunder.* By Herbert S. Zim.

Illustrated by James Gordon Irving. Wm. Morrow and Co., \$2.00.

For those familiar with Dr. Zim's many excellent science books for children it need only be said that *Lightning and Thunder* is a valuable addition and up to par with the others. This book will provide the young reader with a fascinating account of thunderstorms, their origin and development. Dr. Zim's account ranges from superstitions and mythology to a careful and quite lucid exploration of the weather phenomena that lie behind lightning and thunder. Data are given on the frequency of thunderstorms in all parts of the United States, how variable heating of different land surfaces produces vertical air currents, how these invisible chimneys of rising air are cooled to form clouds, how electrical charges are produced on raindrops, and how the flow of charged particles in the air results in the violent discharge we call lightning. Many excellent and easily performed experiments are included in the book so that the child can demonstrate and visualize the phenomena that are involved in thunderstorm activity. Accuracy and specific detail in lucid writing are combined with Mr. Irving's usual outstanding illustrations to provide the child with an absorbing account of thunderstorms. Thunderstorms are beautiful, exciting, and can be dangerous. This book will increase the child's appreciation of the beauty and power of his natural world, offer him sound understandings leading to safety, while freeing him from unnecessary fears.

R. W. Burnett

*Champlain of the St. Lawrence.* By Ronald Syme. Illustrated by William Stobbs. Morrow, \$2.50.

A readable, sympathetic biography which presents Samuel de Champlain from his earliest voyage to New France, through the period of the establishment of Quebec, until his death in 1635. Occasional quotations from journals of

the period are included in the text. The book can be read by those in fourth to seventh grades because of the simplicity and clarity of the writing. The format is average with suitable illustrations in black and white and large type. Will be useful as supplementary reading on North American exploration. Recommended.

Laura E. Cathon

*Chip, the Dam Builder.* By Jim Kjelgaard. Holiday House, \$2.50.

Chip is a wise old beaver whose home is destroyed by poachers. He escapes, travels over the mountains, through the woods to a new creek, meeting and thwarting his many natural enemies. His mate and three other beavers also escape and under Chip's guidance help build a new dam and start a new colony. The new pond formed is a refuge for trout, geese and muskrats. At last man comes, one with eye only for personal gain, another with the knowledge of the beaver's value in controlling water supply.

A good story of wild life ways and the habits of the beaver. For all nature lovers fifth grade and up.

Heien C. Bough

*Wild Horse Island.* By Elisa Bialk. Illustrated by Paul Brown. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.00.

Jim, a Chicago boy who has the normal ten-year-old's love of horses, moves to this island in Flathead Lake, Montana, with his family. There he finds that sharing his new-found kingdom with Cub-Scout friends in the new school multiplies his happiness. There is joy in being part of a team. Finding a real wild horse, although it creates problems and difficulties, results in the happy climax of a wonderful year for Jim.

Lillian Novotny

*Play with Trees.* By Millicent E. Selsam. Morrow, \$2.00.

Boys and girls from eight to twelve will enjoy the activities suggested in this first book about trees. Older students will find useful information in it. First experiments deal with the finding of seeds and the growing of trees.



Others include ways of collecting and exhibiting stems, leaves, buds, flowers, and twigs of trees.

H. R. F.

*Silver Spurs.* By Billy Warren. David McKay, \$2.50.

Every budding young cowboy will wish for a relative to visit who is as patient and as understanding as Randy's Uncle Bart, owner of the 7 Bar 7 Ranch in New Mexico.

When Randy first went to visit his Uncle's ranch he asked too many questions and made many mistakes, but Uncle Bart helped him to do his level best. Not only did he learn how to help with the bronco-busting and cattle-punching, but he also helped to clear up the mystery of the cattle rustlers and earned the coveted prize of the Silver Spurs.

This may seem somewhat impossible to the older readers, but the eight to ten-year-olds will be completely satisfied with the story and thoroughly delighted with the black and white illustrations.

Charlemae Rollins

*Christmas Bells Are Ringing.* Selected By Sara and John E. Brewton. Decorations by Decie Merwin. MacMillan Company, \$2.50.

A gay and lively collection of verses arranged by the various Christmas appeals, almost chronologically from pre-to post-Christmas joys, both secular and Christian. Contemporary authors are represented but many are from out-of-print sources. Each section of poems has an appealing pen and ink sketch. A valuable addition to the poetry shelf for third grade and up.

Helen C. Bough

*Rockets, Jets, Guided Missiles and Space Ships.*

By Fletcher Pratt. Illustrated by Jack Coggins. Random House, \$2.75.

My eight-year-old summed it up with just a touch of awe in his voice: "This is a *neat* book." So there is very little I need add. The large, handsome colored pages will entice even younger readers, and will stimulate all of them. The text, condensing a wealth of information, weaves its way from the first Chinese rockets up through "the rocket's red glare" of the War

of 1812 to modern military and experimental models. From these to possibilities of rocket-ship space travel is an easy step. The text is pitched for the intermediate and upper grades, making this a book that teachers can well use as a resource volume. Here the lack of page numbers and an index will prove a handicap. If this book is going to be used as widely as I anticipate, a cloth-bound edition for school use will be needed.

H. S. Zim

*Snowy.* By Jan Vlasak and Josef Seget. Henry Schuman, \$2.50.

This is an illustrated account of the growth and development of a polar bear cub. It is a matter of some scientific interest for it describes the preparation and techniques that were used at the Zoological Gardens in Czechoslovakia in the first successful raising of a polar cub in captivity.

The book is literally a case study of an interesting experiment. Although the photographs are reasonably good and depict both growth stages and interesting "human interest" angles in a cub's life they, like the text, are of more interest to the naturalist than they are likely to be to the average child. Adolescent children who have developed a thirst for accurate nature lore may find the account and the pictures highly absorbing.

R. Will Burnett

*Cloud Girl.* By Olive W. Burt. Illustrated by Harry H. Lees. Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.50.

Cloud Girl, a nine-year-old Navaho, wanted a playhouse like the one the agent had built for his little girl, but she was afraid her parents would not think of making one for her. Being a Navaho child, she could not ask her parents for a playhouse as any of our children would have done. So Cloud Girl secretly presented the white girl (to whom she had never spoken) her very best little rug to beautify the playhouse. The events that followed exceeded Cloud Girl's fondest hopes.

This is an altogether charming story which nine-to twelve-year-old girls will enjoy. The

author has succeeded in showing the dignity, the kindness, as well as individuality of *the Dineb*, The People, as the Navaho call themselves. The Navaho children, for example, are frightened by the Big Voice, as they call the agent. Their people do not raise their voices. Nor do they have words of command in their language. Navaho children have never heard the word *burry*—except from their white teachers.

Considering the present poverty, the needs and problems of the Navaho, this story borders on the Pollyannish—even for this age level. Nonetheless, it is a true and satisfying glimpse into their lifeway. The author has missed the opportunity to acquaint her readers with the many details of Navaho life, such as how they make their bread, what dishes they use, why the men paint themselves black, etc.—details the young readers will consider glaring omissions. The illustrations are excellent.

Sonia Bleeker

*Bambi's Children*. By Felix Salten. Illustrated by Phoebe Erickson. Adapted by Allen Chaffee. Random House, \$1.00.

An adaptation of *Bambi's Children* for younger boys and girls. Tells of a year in the life of Geno and Gurri, twin children of Faline and Bambi. Beautiful illustrations in color and in black and white. Laminated board covers.

K. E. Hodapp

*This Boy Cody*. By Leon Wilson. Illustrated by Ursula Koering. Franklin Watts, Inc. \$2.50.

The colorful, colloquial style of *This Boy Cody* lends humor, charm, and atmosphere to a well-written book. Life in the Tennessee mountains becomes real and "plumb pleasant" as one reads about ten-year-old Cody Capshaw, the "original ring-tail tooter" and his smart little sister Omalia, his whittling father, and his busy, good-natured mother. The book is a must for children who know only the "hill-billies" of comic strips. The illustrations by

Ursula Koering are just right.

Hannah M. Lindahl

*Whistling Stallion*. By Stephen Holt. Illustrated by Pers Crowell. Longmans, \$2.50.

A horse story of the wild variety in which the stallion becomes symbolic of freedom for the boy who gentles him: mostly freedom to live unrestrained by an overweening uncle. The plot is not unusual, but the perseverance of the boy in his dual struggle for the horse and for the family's independence, lift the book into a class above the average.

Frances E. Whitehead

*Water of Kane*. By Mary Kawena Pukui. Retold by Caroline Curtis. Illustrated by Richard Goings. Kamehameha Schools Press, (no price given).

Thirty-two Hawaiian legends retold. Many of the customs of the Islands of Hawaii, Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Lanai, and Mari, are woven into the stories which include animal stories as well as tales of the religious beliefs of the natives. Illustrated with brown and white full-page drawings. Detailed glossary of Hawaiian words and names. Sturdy school-type binding. Will be useful for the storyteller, teacher, and also for children in grades 5 and 6.

Charlemae Rollins

*Rocky Point Campers*. By Jane Rietveld. Illustrated by the author. Viking, \$2.00.

A story of camping out built on a background of family unity. Mother and Dad work at a nearby cherry orchard to earn money for another second-hand car while Danny, Carrie, and Grandpa have the responsibility of taking care of the campsite. Children of ten and above will be enthusiastic about the possibilities of a vacation on a limited budget filled with good times as well as the joy of working together as a family.

Lillian Novotny

#### For Younger Children

*My Bunny Book*. By Genevieve Cross. Illustrated by Charles Clement. Cross Publications, \$1.00.

An over-size book, showy and attractive except for the last two illustrations. Due to some fault in lithographing the children's skin has turned from flesh to a garish orange. Despite this and the weak binding, it is a lot of book for the money and will be a welcome addition to the small collection of spring and Easter stories. Little children will like the pictures as well as the short account of the cottontail who found a good home with Peter and Patty.

Elizabeth M. Beal

*Happy Easter.* By Kurt Wiese. Viking Press, \$1.50.

With cheerful colors and a minimum of words the author-illustrator describes the rabbits going about their special business of painting the Easter eggs with rainbow hues. Small children will enjoy the climax as with a crinkle here and a crackle there the shells break open and from each gaily colored egg there steps a matching chicken. Of course there are no eggs—that year, "BUT oh, such beautiful chickens!" A satisfying story for spring or Easter. Ideal to use with a Balopticon.

Elizabeth M. Beal

*Chestnut Squirrel.* By Henry Steele Commager. Illustrated by Lisl Weil. Houghton, \$2.00.

Little Chestnut does not mean to be a naughty squirrel, but like many a five-year-old boy, he often finds himself in trouble. The animals in this story are quite human in habits and homes. Chestnut's doings, while not always original, should prove interesting to both kindergartners and primary-graders. Like the small boy in *The Backward Day*, he has a backward day of his own. Like *Curious George*, he sails into the air with toy balloons (but his way of coming down is his own).

Friendly, humorous illustrations help to make this pleasant reading.

Elizabeth Lee Raynor

*Tiny Toosey's Birthday.* By Mabel G. La Rue. Illustrated by Mary Stevens. Houghton, \$2.00.

Tiny Toosey, his mother and all his broth-

ers and sisters have a lively day when they celebrate Tiny's birthday with a trip to the city. Their adventures and mis-adventures are entertainingly related and appealingly illustrated.

A very useful book on a primer level designed for supplementary reading to follow the McKee primer *With Jack and Janet*.

Elizabeth Lee Raynor

*Willie Without.* By Margaret Moore. Illustrated by Nora Unwin. Coward \$2.25.

Willie is a worm, happy without ambition to complicate his life. He finds joy in the simple pleasures of a worm's life and happiness in being kind to others. When Willie loses his one prized possession, his hat, he feels somewhat incomplete, but he takes comfort in composing verses and in making friends with Wog the frog. Finally Willie is given a hat to suit his personality and his ideal of liberty.

This might almost be an allegory; the theme: individualism vs. regimentation.

Appropriate nature illustrations by Nora Unwin.

Elizabeth Lee Raynor

*The Mousewife.* By Rumer Godden. Illustrated by William Pene Du Bois. The Viking Press, \$2.00.

In this captivating tale, a mousewife becomes acquainted with a lonely dove wasting away in a cage. The acquaintance ripens into a close friendship until finally the mousewife seizes an opportune moment to free her lonely winged friend. On the whole, the prose and the illustrations by Mr. Du Bois are effective in creating a mouse world inhabited by creatures of sympathetic if limited understanding. The "animal prisoner who escapes to his natural habitat" motif is always a popular one among children, and Miss Godden's effort is, on the whole, a superior one.

Myron Lieberman

*Elmer and the Dragon.* By Ruth Stiles Gannett. Random House, \$2.00.

Elmer Elevator, the nine-year-old hero of *My Father's Dragon* will be as popular in this sequel as in the first book. After rescuing

the flying baby dragon from the fierce animals of Wild Island, they start home. Flying on the back of the blue and yellow striped dragon is great fun until they are forced by a storm to land on an island in mid-ocean.

The inhabitants of the island are all escaped canaries who are troubled because their king is dying of curiosity. Elmer and the dragon help find the buried treasure which rids the island of the "plague of curiosity."

Delightful nonsense for grades 3 and 4. Attractive black and white illustrations take away all fear of the traditional dragon and beautiful colored end papers are maps of the island.  
Charlemae Rollins

*Eddie and Gardenia.* By Carolyn Haywood. Illustrated by the author. Morrow, \$2.00.

Gardenia of this story is a goat, a mischievous, lovable, prankish rascal, the pride of Eddie Wilson's heart. From the opening pages where Gardenia is presented eating the canvas top of Mr. Wilson's new car, until she is rescued from a catclaw bush in the ending pages, there is never a dull moment for Eddie or for the reader. The setting of a Texan ranch allows much local color. The book is written simply enough for upper primary children to enjoy reading.  
Hannah M. Lindahl

*Fredia Skunk Takes Her Children Adventuring.*

By Gail Elder James. Illustrated by Howard Morris. Exposition Press, \$2.00.

Fredia, the skunk, and her children, Albert, Alphonse, April, Hildah and little Paul have many adventures, including those with a mole, a fox and an owl. They visit the farmer's hen-house and a skating rink, but in the end, as Mamma Fredia quaintly puts it, "there is no place quite as nice as home!"

Herbert Zim

*Skipper John's Cook.* By Marcia Brown. Illustrated by the author. Scribner's, \$2.00.

Skipper John's crew had had nothing but beans, beans, beans, the whole long voyage. How eight-year-old Si and his dog, George, change the menus to fish and more fish makes a rollicking good tale. Colored pictures on practically every page are as much fun as the story and are of the usual fine artistic quality for which Marcia Brown is well known. This is just the kind of beginning book we need to develop enthusiastic readers of sea stories, not only because it makes the subject attractive, but sparingly.

Dorothy Hinman

*Cezar and the Music-Maker.* By Earl and Marjory Schwalje. Illustrated by Nicolas. Knopf. \$2.50.

American children will understand Cezar as he gets into difficulties, works for money to buy a harmonica, and goes to the fair. They will also learn much about the Philippines because both the text and the expressive line drawings convey information and atmosphere with well selected details.

Agnes Krarup

*Scratchy.* By John Parke. Illustrated by Charles L. Ripper. Morrow, \$2.00.

Scratchy, the black cat, had a dream of the way he would like to live. With the Barnets he was mistreated and finally locked out. In search of his dream he makes a perilous journey across town, ever being drawn closer to the fish wharf and his new home.

Unusual descriptions of the cat's first encounters with heavy traffic and with water. A little stereotyped language on the part of the fishermen would detract from reading aloud possibilities. The clear large type, simple vocabulary, and black and white drawings would attract the third grader.

Helen C. Bough



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What kind of stories have American children been reading? These informal essays survey children's literature of the eighteen-seventies—the period that produced the Peter Parley and Rollo books, Susan Warner and her *Wide, Wide World*, and the old *St. Nicholas*. "Beautifully designed by Nora S. Unwin, this book is a feast to eye and mind. Miss Jordan brings to it a keen sense of values, a quiet humor, and a deep appreciation." —Mary Gould Davis (*Saturday Review of Lit.*) Decorated and printed in two colors. **\$3.75**

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OCTOBER,  
1952

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